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OUR NAVY.

[Our readers have another treat from *Harry Bluff's "Lucky-Bag."* The "Scraps" here presented, need no commendations from our pen: they speak for themselves. All we ask for them is an attentive perusal.

For our own part, we had no idea that things were as bad in the Navy as they really are, and as an analysis of the Commissioners' Report called forth in consequence of statements made in a former No. of the "Bag," shows them to be. Nothing more strikingly illustrates the irresponsibility of the Navy-Board, than that they should, instead of asking for a specific appropriation of $23,000 to build a *new* Shark, actually expend $15,000 in *repairing* the old one. Other cases of egregious folly, *Harry Bluff* makes no less palpable than this. We hope that the Secretary of the Navy and Members of Congress will give this paper an attentive perusal, and take the trouble to satisfy themselves if "these things are not so." The suggestion here made about the appointment of a "Commission," we commend to the most attentive consideration of the former. We think the idea an admirable one, and, if carried out, would no doubt be attended with the most beneficial results.

Harry Bluff truly remarks, that the West is the "land of steamboats." The importance to the South and West of a Steamboat Navy-Yard on the waters of the Mississippi, and of a strongly fortified Naval-Depot at the South, is too obvious for argument. We entreat Southern and Western Members to look to the subject, and not to leave the interests of their country and constituents longer exposed and trifled with. Why should not the Navy be identified with the South and the West, as well as with the North and the East? In truth, the whole essay is rich with valuable information and important suggestions, which we would fain dwell upon, were it not that we might weaken what *Harry Bluff* has so well set forth. Wherefore, we say, READ—consider the economy of white-oak ships upon the plan of *no repairs*—its advantages—the suggestions about the Revenue service—the Marine Corps, and other important matters—READ, READ.]—*Ed. Sou. Lit. Mess.*

MORE SCRAPS FROM THE LUCKY-BAG.

MARCH 1841.

To MR. T. W. WHITE,

Editor of the Southern Literary Messenger.

There was a time, Mr. Editor, when the building of single ships might have been rated at millions, and the cost of *repairing* them counted at hundreds of thousands, and seamen would not have wondered; but that time was in the palmy days of Spain, when the ransom of a single captive was his prison-house full of gold—when Mexico, the mines of Potosi, and the *Guacas* of Peru emptied forth their treasures in her lap—when 'homeward-bound Spanish-men' carried silver and gold for ballast, and jewels on freight. Had the document which now lies on the table, and which is fresh from the American Navy-Board, been submitted in those days, we, in our republican simplicity, would have considered it a prodigal piece of vain glory. History would doubtless have treated such a paper, as a boast put forth to the world by haughty Spain, that her men-of-war were built at double charges; and that she, so great was her wealth, and such her spirit of extravagance, choosed to *repair* them at multiplied rates. Here, the statements made from the 'Lucky-Bag' concerning the prodigal expenditure of the public money for Naval purposes, are more than confirmed. Nor is all the story yet told even here; for in these official statements concerning the actual cost of building our men-of-war—of repairing and fitting them for sea, several items of heavy expense are omitted by want of returns. Yet enough is made known to startle with amazement the officers themselves, and to give the public some idea of the evils and abuses incident to the present organization of our Naval system.

Upon the faith of official estimates, stating, that to build and fit for sea a ship of the line, would cost less than $385,000, Congress was induced to pass a law, and appropriate money, for building line-of-battle ships. Years after, Congress demands to know what has been the actual cost of these ships. The Official Report that is now to be considered, makes its own statements in reply, which show that to build one of those line-of-battle ships, the Ohio, and to fit her for her first cruise, has, instead of *less* than $385,000, actually cost from first to last, more than $887,000! and that too, exclusive of 'provisions and clothing'!

It was officially stated to Congress, that the warrant officers' stores for a vessel would cost but so much. Congress voted away the money with a ready will and a liberal hand,—for the amount was reasonable and the Navy popular. But this Report shows that the actual cost of those stores, instead of being but so much, has, in one instance at least, exceeded the amount first stated, by more than seven hundred per cent. But more of this presently.

I did say to you and your readers, on a former occasion, Mr. Editor, that I was about to tie up and seal forever the 'Lucky-Bag.' And such was fully my intention; for its slender stock of facts had been all disposed of in my poor way. Since that, however, a fresh collection has been made, and a scrap or two of such importance has been picked up, that, in justice to the cause I advocate, and in duty to the service, of which I myself am but a junior and an humble member, I am constrained again to solicit from the *pages* of your *Messenger*, the favor 'to pass the word' for another overhauling of the 'Lucky-Bag.' I therefore crave the attention, and the indulgence too, of your readers once

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more. The 'Scrap' of the most importance is the one to which allusion has already been made. It is marked "26*th* CONGRESS, 2*nd Session*, [SENATE] [223]", and entitled "*Report from the Secretary of the Navy, in compliance with a resolution of the Senate, in relation to the cost of building and repairing certain vessels. March* 1, 1841, *read and ordered to be printed.*" It is to be regretted that the call for such information had not been more searching—that it did not embrace more objects and cover more grounds; and that the answer itself does not, as it is, satisfy more fully the object of the call. A statement showing the quantity and value of the different kinds of materials used in the construction, repairs, and equipment of each ship, would not only have been valuable as it regards the economy of ship-building, but it would have been useful in tracing to their origin many evils and abuses of the present Naval system, which yet lie hid.

The information contained in the document about to be examined, is conveyed from the Navy Commissioners themselves to the late Secretary of the Navy, and by him transmitted to the President of the Senate. There are some mistakes in it, which, in a spirit of candor and fairness, I beg leave to correct; for it is my purpose not to examine the paper critically, but simply with a view to get at facts and a true state of the case. I desire that you and your readers may form proper conceptions of the nature and degree of at least some of the evils, which the act creating the Navy-Board has entailed upon the service. After having thus obtained an idea of the real condition of things, we can the better understand how, where, and what, are the proper remedies to be applied. And that we may go knowingly to work, I will first point out the mistakes, and correct them, as far as I can. It is here stated that the Ohio was launched 3d May, 1820. In a communication also from the Navy-Board, but dated 5th Sept. 1822, it appears that the Ohio was launched on the 30th May. I suppose the latter is correct, for it has never before been contradicted.

It is here stated that the Fairfield was built in 1826. The name of this vessel is first borne on the Register of 1829, and for thirteen times has that document, in its annual statements, dated the building of the Fairfield from the year 1828. Such too is my own recollection on the subject. This is important; because it shows that *repairs* have been more frequent upon her, than in this Report they are made to appear. It is here stated that the Consort and Pioneer are each of 222 tons. In an Official Document, marked "H. Reps.—138—2nd Session, 24th Congress, and dated Navy Commissioners' Office, 4th Feb. 1838," the tonnage of these two 'non-descripts,' is registered at 230, and *not* at 222. I am a 'little particular' in small matters, Mr. Editor, for they make up the big ones. Moreover, I have been taught to consider that official statements which do not tally, are as heinous as false credits in private accounts. 'Straws show the way the wind blows.' These little discrepancies, and others with which this Report abounds, and which will be pointed out at the proper time, indicate, what indeed the whole Report itself confirms, viz: that there is a degree of confusion and disorder in the affairs of the Navy-Board, which absolutely forbids, and does entirely prevent, every thing like economy and efficiency in the management of the Navy.

The Report contains no returns to show the cost of the 'ordnance, and warrant officers' stores,' in the first instance, for the North-Carolina 74. Their cost, we are told in a note, is "assumed to be the same as those of the Ohio;" and is put down at $106,921 45. Now the Ohio is an 80 gun ship—is much larger than the North-Carolina—and was not fitted out at the same place, nor until thirteen years after the North-Carolina was. The Delaware 74, is the same size of the North-Carolina, to a ton—they were both equipped from Norfolk, and within three years of each other—and the cost for the Delaware, of "ordnance and warrant officers' stores for a cruise," is returned at $84,312. Therefore, it appears to me that the cost of the same things for the North-Carolina ought to have been 'assumed' at this sum. This would have lessened the *apparent* cost of the North-Carolina by upwards of $22,000, and made the disparity between her actual cost, and that of her sister-ship the Delaware, still greater and more astounding than it is.

The Report states that she was *repaired* before she was completed. She was *completed*, says the Report, in May 1825, and is then charged with $106,921 45 for 'ordnance and warrant officers' stores.' She was *repaired prior* to May 1825, and is then again charged in the further sum of $80,590 41—making the whole cost of ordnance and warrant officers' stores for this ship's first cruise, upwards of $187,000!—more than twice as much as the same items cost for her sister-ship the Delaware. It would appear, therefore, that this ship is charged with the same items *twice*; the effect of which is to swell up her cost, and to make it bear some proportion to that of her sister-ships. I have no reasons for thinking this a mistake, except such as are gathered from the face of the document itself, and from the incongruity, and the apparently irreconcilable character of this and other of its statements. But if the statements here, be rejected for such reasons as these, the Report itself would have to be rejected altogether, so wild and extravagant are many of its statements. A sense of decorum and of the respect due the official character of the Report, forbids the application of any such rule to statements put forth and sanctioned as these are. Therefore, I shall not treat this or any other state-

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ment as false or erroneous, unless the facts to be adduced in evidence of the falsity, be of the most positive character. Moreover, if this be a mistake, I have no means of rectifying it. The object of this paper is to deal with the *naked* truth; wherefore your attention is merely directed to some of the apparently conflicting statements relative to money expended on the North-Carolina; hoping, that, if there be any mistake, some one will point out its presence and the extent of it.

According to this document then, the North-Carolina was built at Philadelphia, between 1818 and 1820, and was completed at Norfolk, in May 1825, when she is charged for 'ordnance and stores' in the sum of $106,921 45, as before stated. And in her 'repairs at Norfolk *prior* to May 1825,' she is charged under the same head (ordnance and stores) in the further sum of $80,590 41! making more than $187,000 for these items alone! Now, the Delaware, according to the same document, was built between the years 1817 and 1820, when she is charged for 'ordnance and stores' in the sum of $84,312. She is next repaired at Norfolk, in 1827 and 1828, for a cruise, (three years after the North-Carolina was,) but is not charged with a *single dollar for ordnance or stores;* for her cost for the first cruise was already high, being upwards of $627,000, without provisions, when it ought to have been less than $385,000. And though she is charged with $84,000 and upwards, for ordnance and stores, in 1820, when she was launched, every officer knows, that most of these stores were not supplied or paid for, until she was first equipped for sea, eight or nine years afterwards. This is not the place to say any thing of drawing money out of the Treasury under the head of 'repairs,' and applying it to *building* and *altering* ships.

In a letter dated 5th Sep. 1822, and to be found at page 835 of the volume of State Papers devoted to Naval Affairs, the Commissioners of the Navy-Board report with much minuteness and detail, the cost of the frigate Potomac. Her cost is there stated at $108,[178,]320 09. In this Report it is put down at $231,013 02, "principally for the hull; the returns for other parts incomplete." How shall this discrepancy be accounted for? Both statements are official. They both come from the Navy-Board.

In Document No. 2, of the 21st Congress, is to be found another letter from the Commissioners, dated March 31, 1819, [1829,] relative to the cost of the ten sloops-of-war mentioned in this Report. "Of the ten sloops-of-war," observe the Commissioners in their letter of this date, "we have ascertained, by a minute examination of the returns made to this office, that seven of them have cost as follow:"* The statement given below is then made; and they add: "The returns with respect to the three other sloops-of-war, are not *complete*." By which we are left to infer that the other returns were *complete*.

	Cost as stated by the commissioners in '29.	*Cost as stated by the commissioners in '41.*	*Difference.*
Warren,	$104,368 00	$105,868 91	$1,500 91
Vincennes,	115,889 77	117,967 99	2,078 22
Boston,	108,849 02	110,946 38	2,097 36
Falmouth,	106,717 70	114,025 84	7,308 14
Natchez,	112,729 18	124,390 76	11,661 58
Lexington,	112,080 08	128,529 40	16,449 32
Vandalia,	98,669 17	116,747 64	18,078 47
Aggregate difference to be reconciled between these two columns,			$59,174 00

How shall these discrepancies be reconciled? The Report makes no note of explanation. The statement of 1829, has been uncontradicted before the world for twelve years; it was put forth, we are told, after a *minute* examination of the returns made to the identical office whence this Report is issued. Whichsoever of the two statements be correct, their discrepancies show that there must be "something rotten in the state of Denmark." *I* shall not pretend to judge between them, for they are both official and equally authentic; yet I think it but just to the officer whose name is borne on the statement of 1829, and who is now numbered among our illustrious dead, to say here in this place, that in no one instance, have I found the statements of THE Report to agree with any previous statement that comes also from the Navy-Board. I have examined among the public documents, for official communications, with which the statements of the Report might be compared; and I have found several, but, unless in one or two instances, where the Report professes to have copied former statements, not a single case of agreement. The original cost of the same ships, as put forth in this Report, and in others equally authentic, and bearing also the endorsation of the Navy Commissioners, differs by tens and thousands, and in one instance at least, by *hundreds of thousands* of dollars. It was shown in 1822,* by a report from the Navy Commissioners, that the cost of the Delaware 74, up to that time, amounted to $317,000. This Report now states it to have been $627,000. Doubtless she cost this sum, but not at that time. Farther than this, I judge not, for I possess no rebutting testimony in favor of either case.

'Obey orders if you break owners,' is one of the seaman's most wholesome maxims; and when orders conflict, the rule on board ship is always to obey the last one, in preference to that which went before. In noticing the cost of these ships again, I shall take the last statement as the correct one, and so consider it, until some one shall tell how the truth may be.

I shall, for the present, call the attention of you and your readers, Mr. Editor, to but one more statement, of which, did it proceed from any other source, I should say there was an error in it. It is

* The 'Lucky-Bag' is not accountable for the grammar.

* American State Papers, vol vi. p. 839.

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the cost of the Vincennes' armament and stores for her first cruise, stated at only $6,453. But the cheapness in this instance is not more surprising than the extravagance in other and similar cases: thus the same articles for her sister-ships of the same class, all built under the same law, and equipped about the same time, and supplied according to the same list, are stated to have cost,—[in the round numbers only]—for the Lexington, $13,000; for the Falmouth, $19,000; for the Concord, $25,000; and for the Fairfield, upwards of $31,000! There is, you will observe, no rule or ratio in the cost of these things; and as $6,453 is perhaps much nearer than $31,515 to what *ought* to have been the cost, and as there is no note in this, as there is in other cases, indicating that the returns are not complete, I shall, in returning to this subject again, take this statement, as in fairness I should, just as it stands.

The organization of the Navy-Board is bad. The seeds of disease were implanted in its system from the beginning. Laboring thus early under a constitutional malady, it has afflicted upon the service, first one and then another of its ills, until at last the whole Navy has got the *cachexia*. The friends of the patient have become alarmed; and in the consternation that prevails, many and various remedies are proposed. But let us, if possible, Mr. Editor, retain our presence of mind, and attempt first to ascertain in what stage of disease the patient really is: then we may proceed to prescribe remedies with a better grace, and to treat the case with more chances of success. It matters little by whose agency, or under whose treatment the patient has been brought to the present critical situation. The question now is, how to afford relief, and by what means may its former health and strength and vigor be restored to this enfeebled arm of the nation.

With such objects as these in view, you will readily perceive, that it is not the purpose of this paper to attack individuals, or in any manner to reflect upon officers—unless indeed some should consider a statement of facts, or an exposure of abuse, as a reflection upon them. Should they so consider it, it will be because they stand behind those abuses, and shall themselves choose to make the application. I aim to show that the system by which the Navy has been conducted for the last twenty years is a ruinous one. To do this I shall state abuses. I aim to show that the evils of this system are becoming greater and greater,—and that many of them have grown out of the institution and organization of the Navy-Board. To prove this, I shall adduce many of the official statements that are put forth in the document before me. I shall endeavor to state facts fairly and truly, boldly and openly, without ever turning aside to see who it is that stands before or behind them.

That the organization of the Navy-Board is miserably defective, and the system a bad one, is plainly indicated on the very face of this document itself. In many instances, the cost of the labor employed, or of the materials used, in the building and equipment of ships, is either not stated at all—because there are no returns—or if stated, the statements are but partial, because the returns are incomplete; and this too is the case with regard to works that have been done by direction of the Commissioners, 10, 15, 20 years ago. Call on any of the Bureaux in the War Department, (I make the allusion not for the purpose of instituting comparisons between the officers of the two services, but for the purpose of contrasting the two systems)—call on any of these Bureaux for a statement of the cost of work done by their direction, whether in this or that section of the country; and they will give you full and complete returns up to the last *quarter*, showing the cost of every thing, from the building of a fort or a castle, down to the shoeing of a horse. But the office of the Commissioners contains no returns for work done by their direction, and even under their very eyes, in the Washington Navy-Yard, 20 years ago!

As for the "cost of the several Navy Yards, and of the improvements and repairs made in each," [being a part of the information called for,] the Commissioners state that they do not possess the means of answering the call. In submitting an *estimate*, however, of what the Yards, their fixtures and repairs *have* cost, the Board "have," say the Commissioners, "of necessity, to rely upon the amount actually appropriated in some years—upon the amounts out of appropriations, blended with other objects *supposed* to have been applied to the Navy," &c. And as for the Navy-Yard expenses since 1831—they answer the call simply by stating in gross for each Yard, the amount of appropriations annually made since that time. That the appropriations were granted, and have been exhausted they know—but upon what objects and in what sums, this vast amount [three millions and a quarter of money] has been expended, and that too so recently, they have not the means of knowing. Yet the works upon which it was squandered are in charge of the Navy Commissioners, and were undertaken by direction of the Navy-Board.

When, in the private relations of life, Mr. Editor, we hear it said of any one, how rich so-ever he may be,—'There's a man who builds houses, and orders work to be done, without ever knowing the cost,'—we shake the head, pronounce the habit unbusiness-like, extravagant and wasteful; and we predict ruin and a speedy downfall for that man. Yet, judging from their Report, this is the manner in which Commissioners of the Navy-Board are required to do business for the Navy. They build ships and direct the most expensive works for the Navy; but the face of this Report, as well as their own direct statements on the subject, show that their

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office does not afford the means of ascertaining the cost of the one or the other. Were their own private affairs managed in this way, extravagance, waste and ruin, we know, would follow. And because in the defective organization of the Board, they are required to manage the business of the Navy in this way, should we expect a different result? When matters are reduced down so as to become an affair of dollars and cents, is it in the nature of a money-loving people to be more tender with the public, or with their own private purse?

Here then, Mr. Editor, deep-seated in the system itself, is the root of some of the evils—and growing evils they are—under which the public treasury has groaned so heavily, and of which the Navy complains so loudly—e. g.—the frigate Constitution was built in 1797; and according to the showing of the document under consideration, was first hauled up for *repairs*, under the present system, in 1833. During this interval, the longest time she went without repairs (or if repaired, the Report is silent as to the times when, and places where,) was from 1812 to 1833, a period of twenty-one years.* And the whole amount of repairs on this ship for the thirty-six years, as far as ascertained and stated in this Report, is $349,220 67. In 1833, she comes, for the first time, under the Navy-Board, for *repairs:* and in 1835, she is turned over, *figure-head* and all, completely repaired for sea-service. In 1838, they haul her up for repairs again! And the repairs put upon her on these two occasions, and within this short time, exceed the whole ascertained amount of her other repairs, by $9,000!

But you will understand more clearly the ruinous rate of the present system, by comparing one of the Commissioners' own ships with this time-worn vessel. Take the Brandywine. She is a live-oak ship, of the Constitution's own class,† and was launched in 1825. Though built in Washington, under the immediate control and superintendence of the Navy-Board, the Commissioners don't, and of course no one else does, know to this day what she cost in the first instance. But they had her under 'repairs' the year after she was built; again in 1829 and 1830 at New York; again in 1830 at Norfolk; again at New York in 1834; and again at Norfolk in 1838—five times in the first thirteen years of her existence, and at an aggregate cost of upwards of a half a million of dollars!—($529,394 21.)

The frigate United States is another war-worn and time-honored ship, and is also here reported upon. She too was built in 1797. After ransacking the old books and musty records of the offices in Washington, the whole amount that could anywhere be found charged to her on account of repairs from the day she was launched in 1797, till she was first turned over to the Navy-Board for repairs in 1821—a period of twenty-four years, is, as far as ascertained, but $68,513 85.* The operations and effects of the present system upon her, are therefore to be dated from that time. They immediately become obvious enough: for from 1821 to 1823, they manifest themselves in the enormous amount of $229,407 82. Chiming in with the abuses of this system, *repairs* are again called for upon this ship in 1826, and they are continued over to 1832, in the sum of $266,723 70! She is ripe for repairs again in a short time, and submits to the operation in 1834 and 1836. And, as though she could never again do without *repairs* long enough to get to sea, she is repaired in Boston in 1839; in New York again in 1840; and again in 1841 at Norfolk, where she now is. In a report from the Navy Department in 1825, submitting estimates and recommending appropriations for a Dry-Dock, it was urged, among other good and obvious reasons, that with a Dock for repairing vessels, the repairing of them "would cost much *less*, require much less time, and leave the vessel in a much more *permanent* and *lasting* condition." Without any of these advantages in her favor, this frigate is only known to have cost for repairs in twenty-four years, the sum of $68,500—but, notwithstanding the advantages of Dry-Docks, the repairs of this same frigate for only twenty years, under the present system, have amounted to the princely sum of $746,692 07!

It is only by contrast and comparison, that you and your readers, Mr. Editor, who are not sailors nor ship-owners, can fully comprehend the defects, and properly appreciate the ruinous tendency of our present Naval organization. Therefore, let us lay this old ship alongside of one built by the Navy-Board, that you may make your own comparisons, and draw your own conclusions. The Potomac frigate is not a fit subject for such a comparison, because she has been used for *experiments*, by hoisting her up in the air, trying the strength of her back, and so on—besides she has been very little in active service. There being no other frigate, besides those already mentioned, contained in the Report, a sloop-of-war will answer every purpose

* It is stated in a note to the Report, "There is nothing in the records of the office, which can be found in time to answer the call of the Senate, respecting the cost of the other repairs of this ship, although she received frequent and extensive repairs after 1812, and prior to 1833." It is to be regretted that the times and places of these *frequent* and *extensive repairs*, were not stated. The Report says that she received at Washington in 1812 "*considerable repairs*—cost not known." Had the times and places of the other *frequent* repairs been stated in like manner, the Senate would have known whether these *frequent* repairs came round once in nine or ten years, as they used to do, or once in every year, or oftener, as they sometimes now do.

† *Own class.* They are both 44's—tonnage of the former 1708—of the latter 1607.—*Report.*

* The Report states that this ship was 'extensively repaired in 1800 in the Delaware'—'the cost not known.' And that she received repairs somewhere else, *somewhere* between 1812 and 1821, but the cost is also not known.

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just as well. It should be borne in mind, that this sloop-of-war, though much smaller than the frigate, is also of live-oak, and is built and repaired under all the improvements of fastening, facilities of docking, &c. which the Board inform us have been introduced and generally established since 1829. She is a Commissioners' ship, the Natchez, built in 1827. Whole cost of building and equipping, including ordnance and warrant officers' stores, $124,000—or $39,000 more than she ought to have cost. At a further aggregate cost, also, in round numbers, of $176,000 for keeping her in repair for nine years, she was repaired in 1829, in 1830, in 1832 and 1833, in 1835 and 1836—and finally broken up in 1840.* Like the farrier's charge of 'three pound ten, for curing his honor's mare till she died,' the Navy-Board might in this instance, have rendered the government a bill, for *repairing* Uncle Sam's ship till she rotted. Thus, it appears, that under the present system, a ship of 700 tons has actually cost for repairs, within eight or nine years after she was built, more than twice as much, as under the old system, a ship of more than twice her size cost in twenty-one years. If the cost of the unknown repairs upon this frigate, alluded to in the Report, could be ascertained, it would vary, but I apprehend could never alter the contrast. With the exception of 'breaking up,' seven of the eleven sloops-of-war built by the Navy-Board, and embraced in the Report before me, present cases of comparison as flagrant and as strong as this.

With the most earnest desire to examine aright the singular and extraordinary document before me, and to be guided by its curious statements to none but right, and just, and proper conclusions, I have come, Mr. Editor, this one time more, before you and your readers—yet there are parts of it, at which I am appalled, and my pen falters to take them up. Far be it from me, sir, in this place; and above all, in times like these—when our distracted corps requires harmony among its members, and concert of action from its friends. to ascribe motives, or impute designs of wrong to any one. But there is something so mysterious and inexplicable to my mind, in the statement here rendered, concerning the cost of the two ships, Delaware 74 and Potomac 44, that I am unwilling to go into a full and *proper* examination of this subject, lest I should do wrong, by causing blame to be attached where no blame ought to rest. I will make a statement, however, of such documentary evidence as is in my possession, relating to the cost of these two ships, as well that you may judge for yourself, as that those who can, may make, the necessary and proper explanation. The 74 was launched in Oct. 1820; the 44 some time in 1822, prior to the 5th Sept. By an official report now open before me, relative to the cost of these and other ships, and bearing date, "Navy Commissioners' Office, Sept. 5, 1822," and to be found at page 835 of Class vi. State Papers, the cost of these two ships is separately stated in detail. By the statements there made, it appears that the whole cost of *labor, together with the materials of all kinds used in building*, was, for the Delaware, $317,016 74, and for the Potomac, $108,[178,]320 09. By the official estimates of January 1816; in which the Secretary of the Navy observes, "I have been aided by the practical knowledge and experience of the Commissioners of the Navy-Board," the building and equipping (ordnance included) of a 74, is put down at $384,862, and of a 44 of the first class, at $268,400. And "so far as the calculations were conjectural," it was presumed they would "exceed the actual expenditure from five to ten per cent." Yet the Report of 1841, states the whole cost of the Delaware undertaken by those estimates, to be, in 1820, exclusive of ordnance, $543,368, and of the Potomac $231,013 02; adding, in a note to the latter, "principally for the hull; the returns for other parts, incomplete." In the document of Sept. 22, before cited, the cost of building and thoroughly equipping for service the Columbus 74, not including ordnance, is given at $426,931 11¼. She was built the year before the Delaware was, and of her the Commissioners in that report, remark:

"The work on the Columbus, the ship first built, amounts to an *unusual* sum. The timber of which her frame was built, was not got out to moulds for such a ship. To fashion it to the proper moulds, required unavoidable additional labor; this was a disadvantage not experienced in building *either of the other ships*. She was, moreover, considered as a model-ship, particularly in her interior arrangements; by which the instructions for building the other ships of the line were, in a great degree, to be governed. The building of ships of the line of the most approved construction, being new in this country, and no system having been formed at the time the Board of Navy Commissioners were organized, the question as to the best plan and most efficient principles of construction, engaged their most earnest consideration and anxious inquiry. Under these circumstances, the keel of the Columbus was laid, and the Commissioners felt deeply the responsibility that devolved upon them. During her progress, it was found necessary to make some alterations, with a view to efficiency and other essential qualities. These causes combined, occasioned much additional labor and expense."

The statements which accompanied this report have been uncontradicted before the world, for near twenty years—they have become history, and are embodied among the American State Papers. And now we are told by a Report from the same office, that the actual cost of the Delaware, at that time, so far from being only $317,000, was, including ordnance and stores, (not provisions) upwards of $627,000! How this discrepancy may be recon-

* Cost of breaking up, not stated.

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ciled, or where the error and the truth may be, must rest with others; for in this case, it does not belong to me to say. But, in the case which follows, circumstances require that I should speak boldly out and with less reserve.

But first, allow me to say one word to those who are writhing under the exposure of abuses in the Navy. They say, it is unfair to compare the *estimated*, with the *actual* cost of vessels. I have charged extravagance and waste upon the present system; and in illustration, I cite the Ohio 74, which cost $654,000; the Concord, 20, which cost upwards of $140,000; the Relief store-ship, which cost upwards of $93,000—*et al.* But how are your readers, who are not ship-owners nor seamen, to know whether these prices be high or low, unless some idea be also given of what these vessels ought to cost? That your readers may be guided by the best judges in the land on the subject, I deem it *fair* not to give my own opinion, but that of the Navy Commissioners, old and experienced officers, upon the faith of whose estimates, Congress votes away the public money. The opinion of these officers as to the cost of ships, is the highest authority within my reach. Before an appropriation is made for building any ship, the Commissioners of the Navy-Board are first called on to state what *ought* to be the cost of that ship; and they reply, by submitting estimates: thus the Ohio, which by their estimates would cost, 'equipments and all, less than $385,000,' was built and equipped at an *actual* cost, according to this Report, of upwards of $654,000; the Concord, that, according to them, ought to have cost not more than $85,000, actually cost upwards of $141,000; and by their estimates, the store-ship Relief, a merchant-built-vessel of about 400 tons—built in 1836 by the Navy-Board, ought to have cost not more than $40,000, but she actually cost upwards of $93,000. Where is the *unfairness* in this? Suspect the man who calls it *unfair*. It has actually cost more to build this store-ship, under the present system, than it costs to build at the private Yards of New-York, the most splendid packets, though they are nearly three times as large.

In a former number of the 'Lucky-Bag,' it was stated that the *repairs* put upon the Ohio, to get her ready for her first cruise, amounted, in labor and materials, to $593,978 51: and contradiction was challenged to the accuracy of this statement. According to the Official Report now under examination, the *Repairs* of the ship Ohio, on that occasion, amounted, in '*labor and materials*,' to but $233,012 46 [16.]*

Here then, sir, is the contradiction that was so boldly challenged. Bearing the insignia of an official statement, it comes clothed with all the formalities, and the most imposing authority known to the majesty of the nation—it is conveyed in a public document, addressed from the Navy Department to the Senate of the United States. An officer of low rank, it is true, but with the good of the service not the less at heart on that account, I made statements on what was deemed *good* authority, concerning the distracted state and pitiable condition of our gallant little corps. The abuses then set forth were honestly believed to exist: with singleness of purpose, I defied contradiction to those statements, and threw down the gauntlet; which has been thus taken up. Therefore am I again called on to appear in the lists before your readers. Like the gallant yeoman in Ivanhoe, ever ready to give his halloo to a good shot or a gallant blow, many of my brethren in arms have cheered my feeble passes with their halloos. More in the partiality of a fellow-feeling, and for the justice of a common cause, than for any merits of a knight so unskilful, they came to my aid; and by gratuitously republishing, they endorsed and heralded forth, far and wide, the result of my poor efforts. Under these circumstances, Mr. Editor, I am in duty, as in honor bound, to make good my first statements—believing them right; or, finding them wrong, to confess my error, and crave pardon for giving them currency.

But before we proceed further, let it be clearly understood what the point at issue is. That the naked question may be presented, I will divest it of the extraneous matter with which it is surrounded. And first of all, as I wish to deal, as far as it can be done, with facts only, I will take the liberty of correcting an error on the official and opposite side of the question. When figures alone are concerned, it is easier to be right than wrong. Next to an erasure from the day-book, or an interlineation of the ledger, there are many of your readers—business men, Mr. Editor—who like the methodical clerk of Osbaldistone and Tresham, can imagine no sin more inexcusable; can hold nothing in greater

* The statement in the Lucky-Bag contained separately, a further item of $27,377 for stores; making a "total, as far as ascertained," of $621,355 51 for the Ohio. But the Report gives no returns in this instance either for stores or for 'provisions and clothing.' Therefore as no statement is there made relative to the cost of stores, it is proper to drop this item, that we may compare the two statements concerning exactly the same items. Judging from the evidence afforded in a case precisely similar to this, it would appear that the unascertained cost of stores for this ship greatly exceeds $27,000. The North-Carolina 74 was built in Philadelphia, and sent to Norfolk, as the Ohio was to Boston, to be *completed*. And for this trip each is charged under the head of "ordnance and warrant officers' stores for a cruise" the sum of $106,000. In both cases the operation of 'building and repairing' was going on at the same time. And for '*repairs of ordnance and stores*,' the North-Carolina is charged $80,000, but the Ohio not a cent. The charge is left blank in her case, and she being the larger ship, one would suppose if $80,000 were a *fair* charge for the other, that a much larger sum would be required for her. These facts are mentioned to show that there is no want of *balances* to offset this $27,000.

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abomination, than an account awkwardly stated, or erroneously rendered. Whether the error be in the place of units, tens, hundreds or thousands—whatever be its amount, the principle is the same; and in their eyes, the error is a sin not to be forgiven. If, in an account rendered, in the aggregate against one of us we should detect an error in the cents, we would be apt to suspect there might lurk some mistake among the dollars too. And ten to one, we would call for a bill of particulars. There is no such bill with the official account here presented. The cost of labor and of materials for 'repairing' the Ohio, is each stated in the aggregate. In carrying out the sum total, under these two heads, an error is made and repeated. It is of trifling amount it is true; but nevertheless it is an error. Thus

"Labor, $137,650 57, } $233,012 46,"
Materials, 95,361 59, }

is twice carried out, instead of their sum $233,012 16, as the aggregate total. The carelessness by which even this small error is suffered to creep into the official statement of a public account, formally rendered to the Congress of the United States, would seem to indicate, what indeed is confirmed by the Report itself—viz. that "they have a loose way of doing things," at least in some of the offices, through which the statements contained in it, have passed. After detecting, and that with such limited means, any error in such a place as this, one's confidence in the accuracy of the whole statement is shaken; for, if in the addition of but two quantities, an error of cents be committed, the rules of proportion would indicate, at least, the probability of an error to a much larger amount, in these two quantities themselves—obtained, as they were, after casting up, item by item, long rows of figures. And we shall see that there may be such an error.

It is to be regretted that this Report does not satisfy more nearly the call to which it is put forth in reply. The Resolution of the Senate, required among other things, that the cost of *building* certain *ships* should be stated. Instead of this, the cost of "building and equipping" those ships, "except for armament," is stated together. Volunteer information is sometimes valuable, and, in cases like the present, always desirable; yet it is a pity, that in this place it had not been kept to itself, and that it is mixed up with the specific information required. In the Navy, the *building* of a ship is one thing, and the *equipping* of a ship is another. If called on to state the cost of building your house, you surely would not think of affording the required information, by giving the total cost of building and of furnishing, together! And though it might be useful to know also the cost of the furniture, yet one would prefer to have that, as I should to have the equipments, stated by themselves and in a separate column. In every official estimate on the subject that is within my reach, or that I have ever seen from the Navy-Board, the *building* of a ship is put down at so much, and the equipments at so much.—The building includes the cost of the hull *only*; equipments include the masts, spars, boats, rigging, sails, guns and the like. Sometimes special estimates are made for 'armament;' in which case, the guns, pistols, shot, &c., are included under a separate head—but nowhere have I ever seen the estimated cost of "ordnance and warrant officers' stores," jumbled and included together, under a special and separate heading; as this Report includes their *actual* cost. The effect of thus jumbling statements and mixing up the *actual* cost of different things, is to prevent a full and complete examination into many particular cases of extravagance and abuse, as they actually exist under the present system. The cost of 'provisions and clothing' is sometimes stated in another column; but whether for one, two, three or more months, is nowhere mentioned. If, for instance, the cost of building a ship had been separately stated, one could have referred to the Commissioners' *estimates* for that ship; then, by comparing one with the other, it could have been made to appear, from official statements, that a ship sometimes costs for building, two or three times as much as she *ought* to cost. In many other respects, also, would such a statement have led to satisfactory conclusions and useful results. Thus—as in the case of the Ohio, where the *labor* for building is put down at $109,000, (the round numbers only,) and for *repairing* at $137,000—or, as in the case of the Boston, where the labor to build and equip cost only $26,000; and the labor to *repair* once, cost $52,000, ($6,000 more than it ought to have taken to *build* the ship)—or, as in the case of the Vincennes, where the labor to build and equip cost $40,000; and the labor for repairing once, $80,000, ($34,000 more than it *ought* to take for the whole cost of building)—or, as in the case of the Shark, where the labor to build and equip cost $9,000—and to *repair* once, $27,000—(more than twice as much as it *ought* to have cost altogether for building her in the first instance; and more than it did take to build and equip her, exclusive of ordnance.)—Now had the cost in labor for *building*, and for equipping, been separately stated, we might have ascertained whether this prodigal extravagance had been committed in building or equipping, and to what extent in each—whether the abuse were chargeable to the carpenters, sail-makers, riggers, or others.

Before the point at issue between the 'Lucky-Bag' and the Official Document, be taken up for discussion, it is proper that your attention should be directed to one or two more particulars in this Report. According to it, the operation of building and repairing the Ohio was going on at one and

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the same time. I shall, in this place, say nothing of such a singular operation. But I will ask you, if you can imagine how it was possible to state to the nicety of 16 cents, the cost of *repairing* this ship, when the building was going on at the same time? The same workman must have been acting now as a *builder*, now as a *repairer*. Even the same plank, or piece of timber, must often have served, a part to build, and a part to *repair*. This nicety in the account, becomes the more surprising, when the imperfect character of the Report in other respects is borne in mind, and when we refer to the acknowledged incompleteness of its returns in those cases, in which one would think they would be most satisfactory. Your attention is particularly directed to the statements concerning the expenditures made upon ships at the Washington Navy-Yard; the expenditures there, are made under the eyes of the Board, and one would expect to find the returns particularly full and satisfactory. It appears, however, that it was not known up to the day on which this Report was dated, what had been the cost of the equipments of the Columbus 74, equipped there more than twenty years before—that the returns are incomplete, of the cost of building the two frigates Potomac and Brandywine, built there between fifteen and twenty years ago—and that the cost of their 'ordnance and warrant officers' stores,' or of their 'provisions and clothing,' has never been reported at all. Up to the 26th day of February, 1841, the Commissioners are uninformed as to the prices at which these costly articles were furnished; and of course, they are ignorant of what sums, if any, were then and there wasted from the Naval appropriations.

Among the vessels embraced in this Report, there are, in the different classes, and of exactly or nearly the same tonnage, two 74s—two frigates—eleven sloops-of-war—four brigs, and four schooners. Most of them, in any one class, are exactly of the same tonnage; the greatest difference in size between any of them, of the like class, is seventeen tons—that being the difference, as stated in the Report, between the size of the schooners Enterprise, or Boxer, and Shark. Thus, there is afforded an opportunity for comparing, in sixty-nine cases, the prime cost of "building and equipping, except for armament," &c., vessels of like classes. In the class of sloops-of-war, the eleven present fifty-five cases of comparison; the 74s and frigates present one in each of their classes, and the brigs and schooners six in each of theirs. The greatest *actual* [not proportional] difference in the cost of 'building and equipping,' exclusive of "ordnance," any two vessels of the same class, is $111,516 00—being in the case of the 74s Delaware and North Carolina, of 2,633 tons each. And the least actual difference between any two of the same class is found among the sloops-of-war, and is $703 45—the difference of cost between the Lexington of 691 tons, and Concord of 700: and each of these cost more for 'building and equipping' than any other of the eleven of their class. The brigs Pioneer and Consort, each of 222 tons, cost exactly the same; also, the schooners Grampus and Shark, the one of 211, the other of 200 tons, cost exactly the same. These two *couple* present the only two cases embraced in the Report, in which two vessels of the same class were built and equipped at the same *time*, and at the same *place*. This circumstance, taken in connection with the sameness of cost, presents a remarkable coincidence—so remarkable indeed, that I deem it proper to call your attention to it; for it exemplifies still further the loose manner in which the accounts are kept for work done by direction of the Navy-Board. The two brigs were built at Boston in 1836. They are charged each with exactly the same number of days' work—the cost of labor for each is the same to an odd cent—the materials of which they were built, cost exactly the same price—their 'ordnance and warrant officers' stores' cost the same, and so also did their 'provisions and clothing.' The two schooners were built and equipped together at Washington, in 1820 and 1821. And though one is 5 1-2 per cent *larger* than the other, they both cost the same for labor—the same for *materials*—the same for ordnance—the same for provisions—and the same for everything. It is in vain that you may look through the Report for any such, or corresponding, sameness of cost in articles for the Concord and Lexington, or for any other two vessels built at the same time, and at *different* places. Though the aggregate cost of the materials and labor for the Concord and Lexington, differs only in the sum of $703 45—the labor by itself cost, for the former, (I drop the odd dollars and cents) $40,000, and $47,000! for the latter—the materials cost $67,000 for the Lexington, and $74,000 for the Concord!

I am a poor man, Mr. Editor, and know but little of 'books and accounts.' At the end of the month I draw my pay, and give the purser my receipt; I keep no books; but, by the time the end of the month comes round again, an empty pocket is my balance-sheet; for it shows, alas, too plainly what my 'circumstances' are. I do not know then, how the accounts are kept for work done by order of the Commissioners. But, to my mind, there is something curious in the remarkable coincidence, and the sameness of cost stated above. The two cases stand out in such bold relief, and present such a wonderful contrast with every one of the sixty-seven other cases, that I am sure will make them worthy of consideration. For myself—professing ignorance of such matters—I can only explain the circumstance by supposing, that in the case of each *couple*, a *lumping* business was made of the whole concern—that when the vessels were finished, the money that was left in hand was count-

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ed over, and what was missing, was divided equally between them.

If then, this be the way in which the accounts are kept for vessels that happen to be building at the same time, in one Navy-Yard, how happens it that they can be kept with such nicety for each of the two very similar operations of *building* and *repairing* the same ship, going on, as in the case of the Ohio, at one and the same time!

And now, having cleared away so much rubbish, and given you some idea of the manner in which business is done under the Navy-Board, we come to the settlement of the difference between this official statement and the 'Lucky-Bag.' The 'Lucky-Bag' stated that the Ohio was *repaired* at an enormous cost prior to 1838–'39. The Report states that the principal part of that cost was for *building* that ship, which was "*continued* and *completed*, at New-York and Boston." That this ship had never been rigged or fitted for sea, we all know. But that she had been *built*, and laid up in 'ordinary,' had been reported to Congress again and again, by every set of Navy Commissioners, and repeated every year, sometimes two or three times a year, by every Secretary of the Navy, from 1820 up to 1840.

To prove this, I subjoin a few extracts from some of those reports. "Of the nine ships of the line and ten frigates, authorized by the act of 1816," wrote the Commissioners in 1820, "one ship of the line [the Columbus] has been built, equipped, and sent to sea—three other ships of the line [of which the Ohio was one] have been *built* and launched."* "The vessels in ordinary at the stations on the Atlantic board, are ships of the line Ohio, &c."† "Ohio 74, launched, in ordinary at N. York."‡ "Cost of labor, materials of wood, metal and other materials, in *building* the ship of the line, the Ohio, $294,042 97."§ "The following [vessels] were also *built* under that law, [for the gradual increase of the Navy]: Columbus, Delaware, North-Carolina and Ohio." Of which, the "Delaware, North-Carolina and OHIO have never been in commission—hulls in *good order—bottoms* would require examination before they go to sea, and their upper works and decks would probably require some *calking*."‖ "Under the provisions of the act of 29th April, 1816, (for the gradual increase of the Navy,) the Commissioners of the Navy have the honor to state, that four ships of the line [those mentioned above] and one frigate, *have been built*."¶ "At Navy-Yard, Brooklyn, New-York, [are the] Ohio and Washington, ships of the line. Their *copper* would require examination, and *some repairs* might be necessary before sending them to sea."* "Ohio, ship of the line—the outside plank of this ship from the water to the rail and part of the inside plank, are decayed. She requires considerable *repairs*. It will take five months to *repair* this ship."† "Ohio—hull, requires extensive repairs."‡ "The Ohio ship of the line requires large repairs."§ Quotations, all to the same tenor, might here be multiplied, showing that the *building* of this ship had been, until the date of this Report, considered to be *completed*.

I have examined every paper and document within my reach—but I cannot ascertain that any estimates have ever been submitted by the Commissioners for '*continuing* and *completing*' the building of this ship. The appropriation under which she was built, has been exhausted long ago. The last of it was expended on the Pennsylvania, and a *special* appropriation was made for launching that ship.‖ Therefore the building of the Ohio could not have been 'continued and completed' from the appropriation for 'gradual increase,' from which she and her sister-ships were built.

I have looked among the acts of Congress for some law, bill, or enactment, containing an appropriation, or authorizing an expenditure of money, for *continuing* and *completing* the building of this ship—but there too, the search has been vain, and the labor fruitless. The President of the United States, the Secretary of the Navy, the Commissioners of the Navy-Board, each and all, had annually, for fifteen or twenty years, proclaimed through Congress to the country, that this ship had been *built*. The report was an old and a familiar one on the floors of Congress, and to the members, for it had been oft repeated. When the fact had become so notorious, with what grace could even the Navy-Board, have put forth its estimates, showing that the building of this ship, if 'continued and completed,' would yet cost $360,767 47? A tap at the door of either of the Navy Committee rooms, asking for such an appropriation for such a purpose, though never so soft and so gentle, would have made a noise that would have been heard in all parts of the country. The echo to it, and the reverberation, would have been great enough to overturn the Navy-Board, and to unseat the Commissioners around it. Those officers made no such estimates, and never asked for any such appropriation. How then were these $360,767 47 obtained, with which the Report states the building of this ship was "continued and completed"? "If a

*Navy Commissioners to the Chairman of Naval Committee, H. R. Dec. 9th, 1820.

†Navy Commissioners to the Sec. Navy, 20th January, 1821.

‡Sec. Navy to Pres. U. States, Dec. 3, 1822.

§Navy Commissioners to Sec. Navy, Sept. 1822.

‖Navy Commissioners to Sec. Navy, 13th Nov. 1823.

¶Navy Commissioners to Sec. Navy, 20th Feb. 1824.

*Navy Commissioners to Sec. Navy, 24th Nov. 1824.

†Sec. Navy in his Annual Report, 1st Dec. 1829.

‡Navy Commissioners to Sec Navy, Nov. 1834.

§Navy Commissioners to Sec. Navy, 1835.

‖Navy Commissioners to Secretary of the Navy, Nov. 1838, Doc. 2, H. R. 3d Sess. 25th Congress.

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single dollar be taken, *intentionally* or *otherwise*, from one appropriation and applied to another, it is a violation of law."*

The President *now* has power to transfer from certain heads of appropriation, to certain others; but there never was an appropriation for "continuing and completing the building of the Ohio," and therefore he could not have transferred any money under such a head. Nor did he.

The Report contains a note, and only a note, relative to what is there stated of this ship. It is proper that that note too, should be considered, before you pass judgment concerning the enormous difference between the two statements at issue, relative to the cost of repairs for this vessel.

"This ship," says the note, "was launched in 1820, as soon as the *carpenters'* work on her hull was completed"—

In the Commissioners' statement of the 5th Sept. 1822, before alluded to, it is shown that the joiners' bill for *labor alone*, on this ship, had exceeded the estimates for 'labor and stuff' together, by upwards of $2000, or 27 per cent.—and that there had been paid for *carved* work, upwards of $1000, or 144 per cent. more than the estimates allowed. The joiners and carvers put the finishing touch, except for painting, on a ship's hull. And her painters' bill, exclusive of paints, oils, pots, brushes, &c., but for labor alone, amounted to upwards of $1100. So, from this statement it would appear, that something more than "the *carpenters' work* on her hull had been completed."

"—And [she] remained in ordinary at the Navy-Yard, at New-York, until 1836, when it was determined to *complete* her for sea service."

Complete, here refers to the building I suppose, otherwise it would have been said, "it was determined to *equip*, or *fit* her for sea service." Again I appeal to former official statements, showing that it 'was determined to *repair* her.' "The repairs of the ship of the line Ohio have been commenced†" "The Ohio ship of the line is completing her repairs in dock, and is nearly finished."‡ "Within the past year, the repairs of the Ohio have been completed."§

"During the sixteen years which had elapsed from the time she was launched, her hull had become much decayed, and the cost of repairs of this part of the ship, is stated above [$233,012 16]; and the expense [$360,767 47] of *completing* the parts of the hull which were left unfinished in 1820, and of all the other parts of the ship, is charged to building the ship, or as what would have been her original cost, when ready for sea, supposing no 'repairs' had been necessary."

I again appeal to former reports from the Navy-Board, &c. "This [the Ohio] is a new ship that has never been fitted out. Time required to *repair* and fit her for sea, two hundred days, [it took three years,] cost $171,072 69."*

"The hull of the Ohio was *completed* and launched under this appropriation [gradual increase] in 1820."† I have sought in vain among former communications and official documents relating to this ship, for any thing about 'continuing the *building*' of the Ohio in 1836–'38.

Congress was induced to order the building of her, because the official estimates stated that she could be built and equipped for sea, all for $384,862. But had Congress been told in 1836, and after near $300,000 had been expended in the building alone, that it would take a further sum of $593,779 63 to *complete* the building of her, and fit her for sea, do you suppose that the winds of heaven would ever have blown that ship about the Mediterranean? or even out of the harbor of New-York? She would rather have been condemned to rot, that a new one might have been built in her place for less money. If this vast amount of money were asked of Congress under the general head of *Repairs*—if it were appropriated for repairs—if it have been drawn from the Treasury under the pretence of repairing her—if it were expended under the name of 'repairs,' then, like the cooking apparatus which was furnished as *clothing* for another vessel, the equipments of the Ohio ought to have been charged to 'Repairs,' or to the appropriation, whatever it may be, from which they were made. "This ship [Ohio]" observed the Commissioners of the Navy-Board, in an official communication to the Secretary of the Navy, dated 19th Nov. 1838—"This ship has recently been *repaired* and equipped from the *ordinary appropriations*,‡ and is now about to sail from New-York." And the 8th of the *same* month of that year, the Army and Navy Chronicle, whose editorials concerning what is done by the Navy and War Departments, are considered throughout the country as official—as much so as any which are put forth by the official organ of the government—the Editor of that paper, speaking by authority on that occasion, to correct a misstatement in the public prints, said—"The cost of the Ohio, since her equipment for sea was commenced, has been charged to the appropriation for '*Repairs of vessels*,' because that under which she was built, is long since exhausted."§

* Navy Commissioners to Sec. Navy, 23d Nov. 1829.
† Sec. Navy, in his Annual Report, 1836.
‡ Navy Commissioners to Sec. Navy, Nov. 1837.
§ Sec. Navy, in his Annual Report, 3d Dec. 1837.

* Papers from the Navy Commissioners' office, accompanying Annual Report of Secretary of the Navy, dated Dec. 6th, 1830, and marked Doc. 2, H. R. 2nd Sess. 21st Congress.
† Navy Commissioners to Sec. Navy, 19th Nov. 1838.
‡ "The Commissioners beg leave to observe, that the estimate [annual] for 'Repairs' embraces not only the *repairs* required to the hulls of our ships, but *every object of equipment*, cordage, sails, anchors, ship chandlery, &c." Letter to the Sec. Navy, dated Navy Commissioners' office, 20th January, 1821.
§ Vol. vii. Army and Navy Chronicle, Nov. 8th, 1838, page 298.

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In the name then of the Constitution and the Guerriere, by the chivalry of that noble and glorious fight, by the blunt honesty of a sailor, why, for the credit and honor of the service, and to maintain the Navy where it has ever been—above suspicion—why, why could not this Report have conformed to these straight-forward statements? For what purpose could upwards of $360,000 have been here charged for building this ship, when Congress had been so often told, and the whole country knew, that she had been built more than twenty years before? There was no appropriation for any such purpose. Why then was the charge made? Was it to falsify the statements of so obscure an individual as Harry Bluff, the 'Scraps' from whose 'Lucky-Bag' had caused the Resolution which drew forth this Report? But, sir, it is not my object to search for motives; I know of none which ought to have operated, and I ascribe none. And above all, sir, I ascribe none to the officers who now are, or who have ever been seated at any time, around that Board. In peace and in war, they have rendered their country yeoman's service. Their gallantry brought the Navy into being—they fought its battles, gained its victories, and made it what it now is. It was their deeds that crowned it with laurels, and it is their blood that yet makes them green. Who then would ascribe motives of wrong to such men? Not I. The thrillings of pride with which the young officer can boast that he is of the Navy, are but reflections from the lustre which the deeds of those worthy veterans have given to it. And for that, they have, as they deserve, both the gratitude and respect of the junior members of *their* corps.

The 'Lucky-Bag' sought only to do what the Commissioners themselves have done over and over again—they have, times almost without number, represented the mal-organization of the Navy-Board; they have pointed out to Congress the defects of the present system; they have from time to time, as the public documents and state-papers will show, suggested many judicious and excellent alterations in the present plan of conducting the business of the Navy. But their recommendations, from some cause, certainly from no fault of theirs, have failed to be adopted. To show the evils of the system which the whole Navy pronounces bad, facts were required for illustration—facts too were required to give point to the argument in favor of the amendments proposed; my object, and the object of the 'Lucky-Bag' was then, to state *facts*, as my object now is, to get at facts. Why then the clashings of these official statements about the Ohio? Here, in this view of the subject, it matters little whether the money for getting this ship ready for sea, was taken from the appropriation for medicines, pay, provisions or repairs; it had all been expended on the ship, and no one doubted that fact. No one sought to attach blame to the Commissioners; on the contrary, the 'Lucky-Bag' endeavored to show that these officers were required to conduct the operations of a "machine, the cogs and wheels of which were rusted and broken;" and that they were not responsible for the heavy and expensive workings of a deranged system. Whether the half a million of dollars spent upon this ship, came from this or that appropriation, it alike shows the extravagance and waste under the present system. Whether it went in part or in whole for 'Repairs,' the extravagant cost of getting that ship ready for her first cruise, was not lessened at all. I do lament, with feelings of humiliation and of wounded pride, I do lament, that any statement in this Report should be at variance with what has been so often before officially stated, and repeated, again and again, concerning this ship. The *appearance* is bad. What security has the Navy for the faithful application of the money voted to it, when the records of expenditure are misquoted, falsified, or officially misstated? The Report shows that the Commissioners cannot tell where it goes; for it does not pass through their hands.* They are not disbursing officers. And though the money be expended on works performed by their direction, all that they know of it, in many instances, is, that it is spent.

But if the appearance of wrong be ever admitted in the manner of disbursing or of accounting for the public moneys, its actual and palpable form will soon be found there too. The doing of what is not right in one instance, blunts the moral sense in another, and paves the way to what is wrong. It changes the shadow into the substance, and serves as a finger-board on the Treasury, pointing out the way to abuse, and indicating that there are means of peculation. As it was foretold in 1829, so it is in 1841: "By degrees the evils under this system have crept on, until the sluices of the Treasury have been opened; and the people are now looking in vain to their public offices and books in this, as in other departments, to find out how and for what, their money has been spent."

Let us be done with this unpleasant affair. The two statements as they now stand, are:

OF THE REPORT.

Building of the Ohio, continued and completed in 1836, '37 and '38:

Total cost of labor and materials of all kinds, - - - - - -	$360,767 47
Repairs do. do. 1836 to 1838,	233,012 16
	$593,779 63

OF THE LUCKY-BAG.

Repairs of Ohio—labor and materials,	$593,978 51
Difference in *amount* of two statements,	$198 88

* *Their hands.* When money is wanted for any work directed by the Navy-Board, the Navy-Agents make requisitions for it upon the Secretary of the Navy. The objects for which the money is wanted, are made known to the Commissioners. The requisitions are sent to the Board for approval. The Secretary of the Navy then issues his warrant for the money, and the Commissioners have no more to do with the handling of it, than you have.

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There is also a difference between the two statements as to the *objects* of expenditure.

An officer, whose *officer*-like rectitude and principles of conduct make his word as binding in morals, as the Holy Evangely his oath in law, writes: "Some of the officers examined the expenditure books, and found the items you published [in the Lucky-Bag] exact to a cypher." That officer has given his certificate, setting forth that he copied from the New-York expenditure books themselves, the statements which appeared in the 'Lucky-Bag' concerning the *repairs* of the Ohio at that place. That certificate is on file in the office of the Literary Messenger, where it may be seen by any one who will call and ask for it. As an error of cents has been detected in the statement of the Report, and as I have never seen an 'expenditure book' of any sort myself, I leave you and your readers to account as best you may, for the difference of $198 88 here presented.

The difference in *amount* being settled, the difference as to the *objects* of expenditure, becomes a question of veracity between the 'Lucky-Bag' and the Official Report. I have already shown by ample testimony from the Commissioners of the Navy, that no such work, as finishing the building of the Ohio, remained to be done in 1836-'38—that no appropriation was made for any such purpose. On the contrary, I have shown from the Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Navy, and the published Documents of Congress, that, in 1830 it was announced to Congress, "it will take 200 days, and $171,072 69 to *repair* and fit this ship for sea"—in 1836, "the repairs on this ship have been commenced"—in 1837, "the Ohio is completing her repairs in dock"—again, "within the past year the repairs of the Ohio have been completed"—in 1838, "this ship has recently been *repaired* and equipped from the *ordinary appropriations*"—and semi-officially from the prudent Editor of the Army and Navy Chronicle—"The cost of the Ohio, since her equipment for sea was commenced, has been charged to the appropriation for 'REPAIRS OF VESSELS,' because that under which she was *built* is long since exhausted."

What need is there of any more proof! Was it for *Repairs*, as the 'Lucky-Bag' said, or was it for *building*, as the Report would have it, that these hundreds of thousands, were wasted on the Ohio! Judge between the two. You have been assured by an officer worthy of all credit, that he copied the expenditures on this ship, from the New-York books, and that *there*, the accounts were kept with *Repairs*. Though a triumph, it is no cause of exultation with me, no matter of gratulation among the friends of the Navy. I am glad to take leave of the subject.

It appears from the Report, that ships built at Boston and Philadelphia cost much less than similar ships built at New-York and Norfolk; and that it costs more to build at Portsmouth, N. H. than at any other Building-Yard in the United States.

A sloop-of-war of 700 tons, cost, [exclusive of ordnance and stores,]

At Philadelphia, - -	$90,977 88
" Boston, [mean of three,]	95,466 53
" Washington City, -	102,461 95
" Norfolk, [mean of two,]	109,143 18
" New-York, [do. three,]	109,372 80
" Portsmouth, N. H. -	115,325 80

These vessels were built about the same time. The North-Carolina and Delaware, each of 2,633 tons, were both built in 1820—one at Philadelphia and the other at Norfolk. Not including 'ordnance and stores,' the Philadelphia, cost less than the Norfolk built ship, by upwards of $111,000. Such is the showing of the Report. If the cost of 'ordnance and stores' were included, the proportions above would be somewhat varied. But their cost has not been included, because the returns in all cases are not complete for them.

According to a well-established rule among ship-builders, the cost proper of labor for building sloops-of-war is about one-half the cost of the materials used—it is sometimes more, and sometimes a little less: this is what it *ought* to be, though the rates here exhibited, defy in this, as they do in other respects, all limits of rule or ratio. The labor for the Boston, of seven hundred tons, cost 26,000 dollars, and the materials 65,000 dollars; but for the Lexington, a *smaller* ship, the labor cost $47,000, and the materials $67,000. We have exhibited in the Report the original cost of eleven sloops-of-war, and the cost of labor and materials in each case of repairs, for thirty-three times. As a general rule, the labor should cost more in proportion to the materials used for repairs than for building; for in repairing, there is the additional labor of pulling to pieces to get at the defective parts. Something too depends upon the nature of the repairs themselves—whether the materials used be mostly copper, as when a ship requires to be only re-coppered—or mostly pitch and oakum, as when she only requires to be calked. In the one case the price of materials would be much the greater, and in the other the cost of labor. Such great disparity though, one would expect to find only in cases where the repairs were slight. I am thus particular, Mr. Editor, because the apologists of this *repairing system* attempt to get over its enormities by a piece of special pleading, with which they would mislead one not informed on such subjects. "Every one of common sense knows," say they, "that the comparative cost of labor and materials for driving oakum at 6 cents, and for driving copper-bolts at 26 cents, a pound, must be very different."

The thirty-three cases of *repairs* upon vessels of the same class, and already alluded to, or the whole seventy-five cases upon vessels of all classes, and quoted in this Report, ought in common reason, to

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constitute data sufficient for determining, at least by approximation, something like the ratio which *should* exist between the cost of labor and materials, when applied to repairs. But, sir, so wild have been the workings of this system, so unaccountable and strange the results as here set forth, and so unlike and unstable the *apparent* cost, when in fact there was no real change in prices, that the data before us, present scarcely any, but *extreme* cases. The Delaware 74 was built in 1820—the cost to repair her the first time, was—for labor $48,000, and $21,000 for materials. At the second time the labor cost $47,000, but the materials $79,000!—(hundreds are tedious in such large sums and are unimportant here; therefore they are omitted.) In 1836 and 1838, when this ship comes up for repairs the last time, the materials cost less than $27,000, but the labor goes beyond $129,000! The North-Carolina, built at the same time, and repaired in 1835 and 1836 at Norfolk, immediately before the Delaware, cost less than 8 per cent. more for labor; while for materials, she cost upwards of 400 per cent. more than her sister-ship, the Delaware, was about to cost!

The Constitution, repaired in 1838 and 1839, cost, for labor $29,000, and $44,000 for materials—but $79,000 for labor and $45,000 for materials, are the prices at which her sister-ship the United States is repaired in 1839–'41. In the thirteenth year of their age, the frigates Potomac and Brandywine, each of 1708 tons, built at the Washington Navy-Yard by the Commissioners, are both hauled up for repairs—the Brandywine for the fourth time, and the Potomac for the second. The latter cost, for labor $14,000, and $49,000 for materials—but $114,000 for labor, and $77,000 only, for materials, are the charges in the other case.

The schooner Boxer, of 194 tons, was built in 1831, and has been twice repaired. Cost of labor in building $11,050. Cost of labor for the first repair $4,000—for the second $11,450! and $6,000 for materials each time.

The schooner Grampus, 211 tons, was built at Washington in 1821.

Labor to build,	- - -	$9,537
Do. to repair 2d time,	-	11,950
Do. " 4th time,	-	9,094
Do. " 5th time,	-	11,839
Do. " 6th time,	-	13,409

The materials used for repairs at each of four different times on this vessel, are set down at $5,000, (omitting hundreds)—the labor to work them up cost $3,000 at one time, $4,000 at another, $9,000 at another, and $11,000 at the other!

The schooner Shark, 200 tons, is another Washington built vessel, constructed under the eyes of the Navy-Board; and therefore, one would suppose, built of the best materials of their kind. Her sister-vessel, the Dolphin, was built the same year at Philadelphia. They both went to sea soon after they were launched; the Dolphin in 1821, as the Franklin's tender, for the Pacific—the Shark to the cost of Africa, or to the West Indies, with Com. Porter, after pirates. The Dolphin, placed in the Pacific beyond the reach of this *repairing* system, showed what *she* could do if let alone. She remained from that time till 1837, continually in active service—and during those sixteen years of constant cruising, she was not repaired in her hull for the first time; unless the operation of calking be magnified into repairs—at any rate, if she were repaired, her repairs were very slight.

Not so with the less fortunate Shark. As soon as she came back from the West-Indies, they had her up for *repairs*. She was repaired, so says the Report, in 1825 and 1826, in 1827 and 1828, in 1829—twice in 1830 and twice in 1831—continued over to 1832, and again in 1833. Here by some means or other she appears to have escaped—for *repairs* are not mentioned upon her again until 1838–'39. And now, as if they intended to make up for lost time, though the materials to build her in the first instance cost but $14,000, and the labor $9,000, she is charged, for this once repairing, $18,000 for materials, and $27,000 for labor! Three times as much for labor to *repair* as to build! And for the satisfaction of the Senate, it is gravely stated in a note, that she was "*nearly rebuilt.*" Schooners were ever an unpleasant sort of craft, Mr. Editor, therefore let us leave them for the present, and hasten to the *repairing* of the eleven sloops-of-war.

The Warren and Natchez, each of 691 tons, were built, one in 1826, the other in 1827. In the building, the ratio of labor to materials for the Warren was 10 : 23, and for the Natchez 10 : 14. By the Commissioners' estimates, the Natchez, completely equipped, would cost $85,000. Upon the faith of these estimates, Congress authorized the building of ten sloops-of-war, of the first class—not one of which cost less than $113,000. The Natchez, one of them, cost $124,000; and the Concord, another, $141,000, or $56,000 more than in the opinion of the best judges (the Commissioners) she ought to have cost. The labor for building the Warren was $30,000: to repair her four years afterwards, was $23,000—being to the cost of materials as 10 : 11; and to repair her in 1837–'38, the ratio was as 10 : 7—the labor costing $49,000, or $3,000 more than it *ought* to take to build and launch her anew, exclusive of equipments.

Of these eleven sloops-of-war, one, (the Natchez) after having been loaded with 72,000 dollars of fresh repairs, was sent to sea. She was gone two years and eleven months—returned in a rotten condition, and was 'broken up'—so says the Report. Among the ten others, there are five cases—viz. the Boston, when she was fifteen years old—the Vincennes, Warren and St. Louis, when they were eleven, and the John Adams when she was eight, in which the repairs in each case, have exceeded

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from $13,000 to $48,000, what *ought* to have been the whole original cost of the ship and her equipments, guns and all. In repairing the Lexington, the labor required to use up $9,484 of materials, cost only $1,994; but, for the Vincennes, $44,000 of materials required $80,000 of labor. If the difference in the labor and materials, as exhibited by the Report, in many other cases, depend for explanation on the relative cost of labor for 'driving oakum and copper bolts,' you *ought* to find in the bottom of some of our ships, copper bolts enough to sink them, and oakum enough to calk the English Navy.

The exhibits which have been made concerning the *repairs* that are put upon the hulls of our men-of-war, as astounding as they are, are nevertheless tame in comparison with the repairs that are put upon their *ordnance*. In the honesty of my heart, I had thought till now, that the guns of a man-of-war were at least exempt from this *repairing* system. But it appears I was mistaken; for there is a column in the Report headed 'Ordnance and warrant officers' stores for a cruise'—in which you will frequently find charged as *repairs*, an amount exceeding by far, the whole first cost of ordnance and stores together. These eleven sloops-of-war are ships of the same size, within a few tons; they are all of the same class, and carry the same number of guns—24 a-piece. Their class and armament being the same, they are allowed exactly the same quantity of 'warrant officers' stores for a cruise'—whether fitting for sea after being first built, or after being repaired, the list of stores allowed by regulation is the same in all cases: and unless regulations be set aside, the stores furnished to one are duplicates of the stores furnished to all the rest; whether they fit out from Boston, New-York or Norfolk, regulations allow all the same, and *only* the same. This being the case, one would expect great uniformity of charges in this column at least. The plain ideas of common reason would induce us to suppose that the guns and stores for every one of these vessels, cost about the same in the first instance, and that any subsequent charge under this head, could never be nearly as heavy as the first; because in the first, are included guns, battle-axes, shot, pistols, swords, muskets, boarding-pikes, and other articles as imperishable in their nature as these, and which therefore being once supplied, will last as long as the ship. But it is not so.

The Vincennes, of seven hundred tons, was built at New-York in 1826, and was forthwith equipped for sea: she was sent on a four years' cruise, and sailed around the world. She had a beautiful battery, was fitted and found in the most substantial manner, and was well provided in every respect. I speak here with marked confidence, for I served in that ship. Her ordnance, including the cost of 'warrant officers' stores' for this long cruise, is stated in the Report at $6,153 00. Two years afterwards, the Fairfield, a ship of the same tonnage, same class, same guns, and the same in all respects, was built at the same port, and there fitted out for her first cruise. She is bound on a delightful trip in the Mediterranean. The same regulations which obtained in furnishing 'ordnance and warrant officers' stores' to the Vincennes, apply to the Fairfield. There is but one list of allowances for them all; yet the Fairfield is charged for 'ordnance and stores' in the sum of $31,515 34! You have heard the story of gold guns for the Exploring Expedition, and of silver magnets for the Frenchman. In 1830, when the Vincennes returned from her voyage of circumnavigation, she brought back her *iron* guns, shot, and other implements of war, in good condition; perhaps the lock of a musket or a pistol might have required mending, but there were many articles of stores in the boatswain's, gunner's, sailmaker's and carpenter's* departments, which were sound and good, and fit to be turned over as stores for the next cruise; or, if sold or applied to other purposes, ought to have been credited to her for what they were worth. She is hauled up for *repairs* immediately, and is again fitted for sea the same year; and with these offsets in her favor, her 'warrant officers' stores,' which with her guns, &c. cost but $6,453 in the first instance, amount now, exclusive of guns, to $14,574 19.

The first cost of 'ordnance and warrant officers' stores' for the Falmouth—same class with the Vincennes—is stated at $19,932. But when she is repaired the second time, notwithstanding she has no 'ordnance' to buy, and has many of her former stores which ought to be passed to her credit in the fresh supply, she is charged $20,444 for *repairing*, 'ordnance and warrant officers' stores;' and whenever a charge is made of money expended, expended it must be, else books will not balance.

These sloops-of-war all carry the same number of guns, and the cost of 'ordnance and stores' in fitting them out for the first time, ought to cost the same or nearly the same for each one. At least so one would think—but such is not the case. The Boston's cost $18,000, and the Concord's $25,000. The Lexington's cost $13,000, and the St. Louis' $29,000. The Vincennes' $6,000, and the Fairfield's $31,000. The Concord's are *repaired* twice at $7,000, and the Boston's once at $16,000, and again at $17,000—others too are repaired at rates as wild as these, but there is in the Report no word nor note of explanation offered on the subject.

In 1830 the Commissioners of the Navy-Board submitted estimates of the expense of building and equipping a 10 gun schooner. Upon the faith of those estimates appropriations were made, and the schooners Boxer and Enterprise were built the next year. According to these estimates, the cost of armament, including warrant officers' stores, would be $4,820—the actual cost exceeded $6,000

* The *warrant* officers.

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for each. In these estimates are separately laid down the cost of 'warrant officers' stores for a cruise.' So astounding is the contrast here presented, that lest your readers should think *I* make a mistake of a figure, I extract for their satisfaction the estimates themselves :

Boatswain's stores,	- -	$250 00
Carpenter's	do. - - -	200 00
Gunner's,	do. - -	150 00
Master's,	do. - -	250 00
		$850 00*

Having their armament, this then is a little over the sum that should be charged under the head of "ordnance and warrant officers' stores for a cruise," to those vessels, whenever they come to be *repaired*. And the second time the Boxer is repaired, she is charged $583 43—but when the Enterprise comes to be repaired her second time, she is charged $6,716 66 for them; an advance of upwards of seven hundred and ninety per cent. on the proper first cost!

Under the head of LABOR, in the Report, are two columns, one showing the aggregate number of "days' work" employed to build or repair a ship, the other showing the aggregate amount that was paid for labor. Thus, to build the Delaware, it took 143,980 'days' work,' at the aggregate cost of $211,626. This is volunteer information, but very valuable, because, dividing the cost of labor by the number of 'days' work,' we are enabled to determine the mean rates which the government pays for labor by the day, at different times, and at the different yards. Thus the price of labor for repairing the Delaware at Norfolk, was in 1828, $1 49 per day; in 1833, $1 38; and in 1838, $1 50. In 1833-'35, for repairing a sloop-of-war, it was, at Boston, $1 60 per day; at Portsmouth, New-Hampshire, $1 48; and at Philadelphia, $1 58. At New-York, for repairing a sloop-of-war in 1834, the price paid for labor was $1 50; and for repairing the Constitution at New-York and Norfolk in 1838-'39, the price charged for labor is $18 98 a day! Here is the official statement, sir; make the calculation for yourself: 1,561 days' work cost $29,627 64. See page 5 of the Report.

This statement is put forth to the Senate of the United States, backed and endorsed by three Commodores, and the Secretary of the Navy himself. Were it derived from authority less weighty and imposing, I should discredit it entirely. Not meaning to reflect upon those officers, I should, had it appeared in any document of a less extraordinary character, still say, there must be some mistake in the matter. But so redundant of wild and extravagant statements is the Report under examination, that if we reject from it, as false, every thing that is irreconcilable with our ideas of good husbandry of public moneys, but little indeed would remain of the Report itself. Nor can I say which would be the less excusable—the real existence of the extravagance and abuse here indicated, or the presence of error, and the misstatements of facts in such a document as this.

"Notwithstanding," says the Report, "the difficulties [shortness of time allowed, and want of clerks] of ascertaining facts with the precision which is desirable, the present Reports are believed to be substantially correct in all cases where the cost of either building or repairing a vessel is given, when taken in connexion with the modifications or additions which are specially noticed in the remarks which are immediately connected with each of them."

There are no 'modifications or additions' noticed in connexion with this, or any of the statements here reviewed, that have not been mentioned also.

The subject is a dry one; and I have been tedious, Mr. Editor; but for that fault I throw myself on the kind indulgence of your readers—for I wished to afford them a practical demonstration of that irresponsibility, which they have so often heard alleged as an objection to the Navy-Board. I also wished to show its defective organization, by pointing out the want of all system and order in much of the business with which it is charged, and even in its every-day operations. Since 1831 three millions and a quarter of dollars have been expended on Navy-Yard improvements, and by direction of the Board, but in what sums, upon what objects, where, and in what proportions, this Report informs the Senate, that the Commissioners have not the means of knowing. All that these officers can say, is, that there has been so much appropriated for the Navy-Yards, there is now but so much in the Treasury—and therefore what is missing has been expended—at any rate it's gone. Vessels are built at twice the sum they *ought* to cost—they are repaired at twice as much as it takes to build—the labor to repair costs three times as much as the labor to construct—the same articles for one ship, cost four or five times as much as their duplicates for another—it costs twice as much to *repair* ordnance and stores for a ship, as it takes to buy them—for the white man and the black, for the common laborer and the mechanic, $18 98 is charged as the average price that has been paid per day, for hundreds of days' work, and no one has been made responsible; and as far as I know, the official and authoritative question, "why are these things so?" has never once been raised. Where then is the responsibility?

The Navy-Board has been in existence for more than twenty-five years. During that time nearly one hundred millions of dollars have been appropriated for the Navy. Vast sums of money have been expended in building, equipping, repairing and fitting ships for sea—upon provisions and stores, upon implements and munitions of war—

* See H. R. Doc. No. 14, 2d session, 21st Congress.

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upon other objects and for other purposes; and all under the direction, control and supervision of the Navy-Board. Plain business men would say, that the accumulated experience of so many years ought long ago to have been hung round the walls of that office, in tablets, showing at a glance for all classes of ships, the proper cost, and proper quantity of every article of every kind used, from the keel to the truck in building, and from a great gun down to a scupper-nail in fitting out—that when a ship was built, or fitted for sea, the actual cost of every article on board, would have been referred to its tabulated value on the wall; and that any considerable variation of prices, would at least have attracted attention, if not investigation. But, sir, it is not my purpose to show what the Navy-Board ought to be; I aim to show that it ought not to be at all. That in twenty-five years of continued and active operation, no such useful effects or systemized results have been derived from the Navy-Board, is but too evident—it appears on the face of this Report, and is borne in silent testimony on many an eloquent, though speechless tongue among the wooden walls of the Navy.

I have examined every document within my reach, and I have sought information on the subject, at every source from which I have the privilege or the means of drawing, but in no one instance, when the opportunities of comparison occurred, have I ever found the *estimated* cost of any work, submitted by the Navy-Board, to come within hail of its *actual* cost. If in any one instance, estimates from the Navy-Board—(I do not mean the so-called estimates for the pay and subsistence of a given number of officers and men for a stated period, at stated salaries—for that is a matter of *calculation* and not of *estimate*)—if in any one instance, the estimates proper from that quarter, have given any just ideas of what turned out to be the actual expense of the undertaking proposed, such instance has not come to my knowledge. The first estimates in which the finger of the Navy-Board is to be traced, are to be found at page 399 *et seq.* of the volume of State Papers devoted to Naval affairs. They, or similar ones, are the estimates by which Congress was guided, when it authorized the building of the ships of the line Delaware, North-Carolina, Ohio, the frigate Potomac, *et al.* Though submitted in the name of the Secretary of the Navy, that officer points out their paternity; for, says he, "In these estimates I have been aided by the practical knowledge and experience of the Commissioners of the Navy-Board," and "so far as the calculations are conjectural, it is presumed that they may exceed the actual expenditure from five to ten per cent." In these estimates, the cost of building and equipping a 74, including ordnance and warrant officers' stores—every thing, except provisions and marines' stores—was put down at $384,862. The Report before me, states the actual cost of the North-Carolina 74, to be $537,773 45—of the Delaware $627,680—and $654,810 44, *as what would have been the original cost of the Ohio, had no repairs been necessary.*

The 'hull and spars complete' for a frigate, are put down in the estimates at $153,475. The whole cost of the Potomac is not stated in the Report—she cost though, it tells us, $231,013 02—"principally for the hull; the returns for other parts incomplete."

At page 900 of the same volume of papers before referred to, are more estimates. On the 20th January, 1824, Mr. Crowninshield reported a bill for building ten of the eleven sloops-of-war that are mentioned in the Report under examination. The following extract is from the Report which accompanied Mr. C's bill, on that occasion: "Your Committee also find, by estimates from the Navy Commmissioners to the Secretary of the Navy, dated 23rd December, 1823, that the expense of constructing, together with the cost of *all materials* of *all descriptions* for a sloop-of-war of the largest class, will amount to $85,000." That is, the ten would cost $850,000—and a bill was passed making an appropriation to that amount.* It appears now from the Official Report on the subject, that their actual cost, as *far* as ascertained, (for the returns in several instances are incomplete) was upwards of one million two hundred and seventeen thousand dollars!

In 1829, estimates were submitted, and a special appropriation of $20,000 was made for *repairing* the Brandywine. This Report states that that ship was repaired in 1829 and 1830, at New-York and Norfolk, at a cost of upwards of $115,000. This special appropriation was made to fit her for a cruise to the West-Indies, whither she went for a few months. When she returned, she was *repaired* again. The cost of these two repairs is stated together. Had they been separately stated, as the Resolution of the Senate required they should be, we should then have found out how far the $20,000 went in repairing her for the West-Indies. The manner in which the repairs of ships at different times and places, and the cost of articles entirely unlike, are jumbled together in the Report, prevents the discovery of many abuses, that are thus smothered. The cost of a bolt of canvass, of a coil of rope, of the carpenter's tool-chest, of a roll of charts, and of a gun, things that are never classed together, are all here jumbled together, under the lumping head of 'ordnance and warrant officers' stores;' so that the cost neither of guns, nor of stores, can be ascertained.

* Act 3d March, 1825, appropriated - $500,000
and proceeds from sale of vessels on the lakes.
Act 18th May, 1826, appropriated - - 350,000
$850,000

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In 1830, the Navy Commissioners, in making out their estimates for the support of the Navy for 1831, reported to the Secretary,* that to *repair* and fit for sea the Ohio, would cost $171,072 69. This Report says that it would have taken $360,000 to fit her for sea, *had no repairs* been necessary. The cost to repair the Constitution was then estimated at $128,081 05. Two years afterwards [in 1833] they commence, and continue to work upon her for three years, at a cost, for *repairs*, of $192,930 72, exclusive of stores. It would cost, said these estimates, to repair the Falmouth, $29,401 81. They commence with her forthwith, and her *repairs* are stated in the Report at $54,999 08. Notwithstanding the pretended accuracy of these estimates—their nice calculations of sixty *nine*-cents—*five* cents—eighty *one* cents, they scarcely come within 100 per cent. of the *actual* costs.

In December, 1832,† estimates were again made as to the repairs of ships, the actual costs of which are given in this Report. It would cost $35,211, "exclusive of docking," it was said, to repair the North-Carolina in 1833. Her repairs were commenced in 1835, and they *then* cost $297,000. "The Fairfield," it was said, "is sound and good, and only requires her bottom to be examined." The looking at that ship's bottom proved to be a costly sight, for the examination was had immediately, and the Report shows that it cost upwards of $20,000, exclusive of stores.

In November 1833, an appropriation of $40,000 was asked,‡ and made for a store-ship. This vessel, though simply a merchant-ship of only about 400 tons, and which, if built in a private ship-yard, would cost not more than $30,000 or $35,000, cost, when built by the Navy-Board, upwards of $93,000.‖

In January, 1836, estimates were submitted from the Navy-Board for *fitting out*§ all the vessels in 'ordinary.' These estimates, you observe, included provisions and every thing. And the estimated cost of fitting out the Ohio, was stated at $450,000. But this Report shows that the actual cost of fitting her out, was—exclusive of provisions, &c. which are not reported—upwards of $590,000. Had the whole cost of provisions, &c. been included, they would, according to these rates, have swelled up the actual cost of fitting out that ship, to near $700,000.

At a later day, Congress, acting by estimates from the Navy-Board, appropriated $400,000 for building six sloops-of-war of the third class. And in the documents which accompanied one of the Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Navy, it was stated that this appropriation had been exhausted, but all the vessels had not been built. And as in every instance, the cry was, more, Congress, give! give!!

The manner in which the general estimates are submitted, and the appropriations are made, for the annual support of the Naval service, opens still wider the door to complaints against the Navy-Board. There are sixteen distinct heads of appropriation for the annual support of the Naval service of England; and only eight or nine for ours. The two services embrace the same objects—and why should our appropriations be less specific than theirs? I extract the fourth item from the Commissioners' estimates for the last year: "For the repairs of vessels in ordinary, and the repairs, and wear and tear of vessels in commission, $1,000,000." This, or one even more general in its terms, is a standing head of estimate and appropriation. Under it, the estimates for the current year were for $1,425,000, and the appropriations $2,000,000. And then, as though these sweeping generalities might alarm the sticklers for specific appropriations on the floors of Congress, comes the special enumeration of objects, as given in the margin;* and against which Mr. Adams once said he should vote, because, after enumerating every object under the sun, it then added—"and for no other object or purpose whatever."

Under this general head, and by one of those beautiful figments in law, of which philosophers sometimes tell us—vessels are altered soon after

* Annual Report of Secretary Navy, dated 6th December, 1830, and marked Doc. 2. H. R. 2nd Session, 21st Congress.

† Paper M. of the accompanying Documents of the Report of the Secretary of the Navy, December 3rd, 1832.

‡ Paper M. of the Documents which accompanied the Secretary of the Navy's Report of 30th November, 1833.

§ Doc. 138—2nd Session, 24th Congress, H. R., and dated Navy Commissioners' Office, 4th February, 1838.

‖ *To fit out a ship*—to furnish her with proper masts, sails, yards, ammunition, artillery, cordage, anchors, and other naval furniture, together with sufficient *provisions* for the ship's company.—*Falconer's Marine Dictionary.*

* For contingent expenses that may accrue for the following purposes, viz:

For the freight and transportation of materials and stores of every description; for wharfage and dockage; storage and rent; travelling expenses of officers, for house-rent to pursers, when duly authorised, and transportation of seamen; for funeral expenses; for commissions, clerk-hire, office-rent, stationary, and fuel, to Navy-Agents; for premiums, and incidental expenses of recruiting; for apprehending deserters; for compensation to judges-advocate; for per diem allowance to persons attending courts-martial and courts of inquiry, or other services as authorised by law; for printing and stationary of every description, and for working the lithographic press; for books, maps, charts, mathematical and nautical instruments, chronometers, models and drawings; for the purchase and repair of fire-engines and machinery; for the repair of steam-engines in Navy-Yards; for the purchase and maintenance of oxen and horses, and for carts, timber-wheels, and workmen's tools of every description; for postage of letters on public service; for pilotage and towing ships-of-war; for taxes and assessments on public property; for assistance rendered to vessels in distress; for incidental labor at Navy-Yards, not applicable to any other appropriation; for coal and other fuel, and for candles and oil, for the use of Navy-Yards and shore stations; *and for no other object or purpose whatever*, - - - - - $450,000

For contingent expenses, for objects not herein before enumerated, - - - - - - $3,000

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they are built, as the Brandywine was in 1826, and as others have been at a later day, and the alterations are charged as *Repairs*—by it, the building of a vessel is called *repairing*; and new vessels are built* from this appropriation;—by it, vessels, as the Enterprise, are charged seven or eight prices for warrant officers' stores, and they are called *repairs*—(I once heard of a galley (kitchen) being furnished as *clothing*);—by this beautiful figment of the law, vessels are nearly rebuilt from this broad appropriation, and that too at double their original cost, as was the case with the Shark;—and by it, vessels, as the Vincennes, which cost originally but 117,000 dollars, are actually repaired at a cost of 133,000 dollars;—and by it, other wild works are carried on under the sweeping name of *repairs*.

What is there to be said in excuse for repairing the schooner Shark at twice her original cost! or of completing the ship-of-the-line Ohio at such an enormous expense! This ship had performed no gallant deed—had accomplished no daring achievement. Her decks had never, like our favorite United States and Constitution, been drenched with the brave blood of the land. For their preservation, no amount that can be necessary would be too great in the eyes of the country. But there were no associations connected with this ship—there had been nothing to consecrate her name to the recollections of the people, nothing to endear her to the nation—she was a mere unendowed mass of wood and iron, that had never bowed to the sea nor bent to the breeze. If Congress had been asked for a specific appropriation of $600,000 to get this ship ready for sea, when in the opinion of the best judges—the Commissioners of the Navy-Board—a new ship of her class could be built and equipped out and out, for but little more than half that sum;—if any one had had the hardihood to ask a specific appropriation of $45,000 to repair the Shark in 1839, when at first, it cost but $23,000 to build her—what, think you, would have been the action of Congress on the subject! If estimates for any such appropriations had been ventured forth from the Navy-Board, you understand too well the genius of the American people, not to know, that that Board would long ago have been overturned. Can any thing more strikingly than this, illustrate the irresponsibility of the Navy-Board! Without the consent of Congress, which might have been ascertained by asking for a specific appropriation, that Board undertakes to repair ships at twice their original cost, and no one is held responsible for it. In the private affairs between man and man, what would become of the agent who should thus manage for his principal! Is rigid accountability less important in public, than it is in private affairs!

* "All the other vessels were built, or have been rebuilt, under special appropriations, or from the annual appropriations for 'repairs of vessels,' &c." Letter from Navy Commissioners, December 14, 1840.

It is owing to this want of accountability, in our present Naval system, that the cost, from first to last, of getting this one 74 ready to sheet home her topsails for her first cruise, has been made to amount to a sum, which, taking the estimates of the Commissioners for data, would be enough to cut the live-oak from the evergreens of Florida, and to build and launch* three double-banked frigates and ten sloops-of-war of the first class—upwards of 12,000 tons of shipping—a force which, if equipped and put in the place of the Ohio, would prove nearly, if not quite, a match for all the vessels besides, of all our Naval squadrons put together, and as they were, according to the Commissioners' Report of vessels at sea, in 1840.

But these are not all the evils of such sweeping appropriations and such irresponsibility. In submitting the yearly estimates for the support of the Navy, it has been customary of late to state what force it was proposed to keep in active service. That force was made the basis of the estimates which were submitted for the support of the Navy. Congress, by making the required appropriations, virtually acknowledged that the honor of the nation, the welfare of its citizens, and the interests of their commerce, required this force. Congress having voted the money, the Executive Department was, in duty, as in honor, bound, to maintain it, or to set forth at the first opportunity, the reasons which induced a departure from the first intention. But I have never in one instance known the estimated force to be put in service, or the reasons for not keeping it in commission, made known—unless indeed some such remarks as these be considered as a statement of such reasons:—"All the services required of our Naval force have been promptly performed"—"Commerce has been protected," &c.

Among the force, promised in the estimates, to be kept in service for 1836, were six frigates and fourteen sloops-of-war. The Navy Register shows that at the end of that year, there were in actual service but five of the former and eight of the latter. For the next year, the estimates were for the same. The Navy Register reports, in like manner, one frigate and four sloops-of-war short of the estimate. In the next year, appropriations were asked for six frigates and twelve sloops-of-war. The Navy Register shows that there was one more sloop-of-war than the estimate called for; but, to make up for this, the frigates were deficient by three, one of which was 'getting ready.' In 1839, the estimates called for six frigates and seventeen sloops-of-war, and in 1840, for six frigates and nineteen sloops-of-war—but five frigates and thirteen sloops-of-war is the greatest active force shown on the Register for either of these years.

You have seen the various purposes to which the appropriation of "Repairs, &c." is applied. The aggregate number of frigates and sloops esti-

* *Not equip*

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mated for 1836, 1837 and 1838, exceeded the actual number kept in service for those years, by thirteen. They were the years in which such wild works were carried on in repairing the Ohio, the Vincennes and John Adams—which three ships alone, were repaired at an aggregate cost of more than $840,000. So, the appropriation for Repairs had been exhausted before it reached the thirteen other vessels; and though money had been granted to pay their crews, the ships could not be equipped for sea, because the money appropriated for that purpose, had been squandered in repairing others, at more than it would cost to build new ones. And this, I suspect, is the reason why all the ships from year to year for which appropriations are regularly made, are not employed. Nor is this all. The appropriations for the pay and subsistence for the crews of the unemployed vessels, form an unexpended balance under this head, which the President may transfer to some other appropriation; and even this balance sometimes passes off through this great leak of "*Repairs*" in the system—*e. g.* "$200,000 was by authority of the President of the United States, on 30th November, 1839, taken from the appropriation for *Provisions*, and carried to the appropriation of *Repairs and wear and tear of vessels.*"*

By official statements to Congress from the 2nd Comptroller's office, it appears that in 1836, upwards of $200,000;† in 1838, $168,000;‡ in 1839, $399,000; in 1840, $316,000,◊ more, than was appropriated, were in those years drawn out of the Treasury for 'Repairs.' And notwithstanding that upwards of $300,000 more than the appropriation allowed, or the estimates called for, were thus added for *Repairs* in 1840, but thirteen of the nineteen sloops-of-war proposed and authorized, could be kept in commission.

Abuses have grown out of this repairing system, like evil weeds upon the Navy. By the facts quoted above, it appears that even the Commissioners have not been able to keep pace with their growth. The expenditures have regularly gone beyond the appropriations—the estimates have been increased, and the appropriations enlarged from year to year—but they have invariably proved insufficient for the required force. The Commissioners don't know what the annual cost of repairs will be; and how should they, when it is shown by this Report, that in many cases they don't know what the repairs for a ship do cost? In 1833, they asked for a half a million for repairs—in 1836, for a million—in 1837, for a million and a quarter—and in 1841, for a million and a half, and they got two millions. And what do you think, with this swelling of the budget, is the difference between the active force of 1834 and 1840! *Ninety-two guns.*

This half a million [$590,000] of 1834 borrowed $100,000, from provisions, or some other head, and kept 452 guns in active service; and the million of 1840 borrowed $300,000, and could keep but 544 guns at sea! And we shall see how much the two millions of 1841 will borrow, and what force it will keep in repair. If $700,000 in 1834 could keep a force of 452 guns in repair, why should it take double that sum in 1840 to keep in repair a force of only 92 guns more? Must stronger proof be brought against the Navy-Board, before Legislators will perceive that it is at best a tuft of marine misletoe, that is exhausting the Treasury and killing the Navy!. Under its management, two dollars are required in 1840, to do the work that was accomplished with one dollar in 1834. Even the Commissioners cannot keep pace with the reckless prodigalities that are practised under this system. In 1832 their estimates for 'Repairs,' called for half a million for the next year; and $600,000 were expended. In 1834, they called for $600,000, and expended $700,000. In 1836, they called for a million, and expended a million and a quarter. In 1837, they called for a million and a quarter. and expended—I don't know how much, for I could not find the 2d Comptroller's returns to Congress:—but their last estimates called for a million and a half for 'Repairs,' and Congress gave them two millions. Will no one ask to know the cause of this disproportionate increase of expenditures for repairs? And shall there be no end to such a growth? Every year, with one exception,* for the past six or eight years, more money has been regularly spent than was voted to this appropriation. It *takes* money from other heads, and this is called a *repayment.*†

It is said, "Repeal the law creating the Navy-Board, substitute Bureaux for Commissioners, and we shall be better off." The change must be more thorough than this—though this is an important step towards reform. Experience once taught us that Schoolmasters were of little or no use in a man-of-war, and their name was changed for Professors of Mathematics; but the plan of teaching remained the same in all other respects—and Professors now, are as useless in our men-of-war, as Schoolmasters used to be. If the title of Commissioner be exchanged for that of "Chief of Bureaux," it will be but a change of name. It is not the Commissioners of the Navy-Board, but the plan—the whole system, that is at fault. In the

* Secretary of the Navy to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, 23d Dec. 1839.

† H. of R. Doc. 126, 2d Sess. 24th Congress.

‡ H. of R Doc. 135, 3d Sess. 25th Congress.

◊ H. of R. Doc. 88, 2d Sess. 26th Congress.

* I have not been able to ascertain how much was drawn out of the Treasury in 1837, for Repairs.

† For an example of this singular mode of keeping accounts, see an official statement of the amount of appropriations and expenditures for the Naval service for 1840—transmitted by the late Secretary of the Navy to the House of Representatives.—*Doc. 88—2nd Session, 26th Congress.*

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work of reorganization, it were well to inquire if means cannot be devised for rendering less general in their application, the appropriations for "Repairs and wear and tear of vessels"—whether wear and tear might not constitute a separate head—and whether 'Repairs' might not be subdivided, so as to include a specific amount for each class of vessels. This though is put forth rather as a suggestion for calling attention to the subject, than as a distinct proposition. Most of the information possessed on this subject is merely of an incidental kind; and therefore neither such as to prepare me for advocating any particular change under the heads of appropriations, nor such as to justify me in doing any thing more than to suggest inquiry on the subject.

The information to be gathered from the statements in the Report concerning the eleven sloops-of-war, is particularly valuable. Considering the inroads which have been made into the Treasury, from first to last, by these vessels, they lack, in nothing but numbers, a fair claim to the title of "The Forty Thieves." They were all built between the years 1825 and 1829; and the mean of the time, from the year they were launched, till they were put under the last repairs mentioned for them in the Report, gives ten years as their average age. Each of the whole eleven was repaired twice; eight of them, three times; and three of them, four times; giving an average of three repairs for each vessel. The average expense of repairing the whole eleven twice, was, *exclusive* of ordnance and warrant officers' stores, $32,552 46 for each one—of repairing eight of them the third time, $46,877 09 for each one; of repairing three of them the fourth time, $75,050 88. According to the ratio here indicated, the fifth repair upon the hulls and masts would average, exclusive of ordnance and stores, upwards of $130,000 00 for each one; which is more, by $27,000 than the actual average cost of building and equipping those parts of them in the first instance. Therefore, according to these rates, it would be much cheaper under the present system, to burn a live-oak sloop-of-war and to build a new one, than to repair her after the fourth time. And in conformity with this rule, the Natchez has actually been 'broken up.' Had the wisdom of such a rule, or the principles either of domestic or political economy, been consulted—instead of repairing the Boston the fourth time, the Vincennes and the Warren the third time, and the John Adams and the St. Louis the second time, these vessels would have been sold and new ones built. The aggregate cost of building them being $516,000, and the aggregate cost of repairing them $518,000, shows, that there would not only have been an actual saving by *building*, but an actual gain of $20,000 or 30,000 on each vessel, which sums might have been derived from the sale of the old ships, their equipments, &c. And here it is to be particularly regretted, that the cost of the *hulls* had not been stated separately and by itself, in each case, and the costs of equipments by themselves. How further advantages would have been derived from such statements, will presently appear.

Dealing in averages and quoting mean results, each of these eleven vessels, when last mentioned in the Report, had been in existence ten years—of which, from the best information I can obtain, about six years were employed in actual service—the remaining four being taken up with lying in ordinary—repairing and fitting for sea. No account has been taken of the service rendered since the last repairs; let us suppose that each will average three years (an over estimate) since that time, which will make the average active service nine years, instead of six. The aggregate cost of building and equipping these vessels, exclusive of 'ordnance and stores', is stated in the Report at $1,137,770. And the aggregate cost of keeping their hulls and spars in *repair* (exclusive of wear and tear at sea,) for nine years of actual service, is $1,316,323. This gives $2,454,093 then, as the actual cost, under the present system of building and equipping, except for armament, eleven live-oak sloops-of-war, and of keeping their hulls and spars in repair, for nine years of efficient service.

I am prepared to show that eighteen sloops-of-war of the same size may be procured for the Navy, and their hulls and spars kept forever in good condition for active service, upon the interest alone, of this sum; which either has been, or if the present system be persevered in much longer, soon will be, squandered and lost entirely, principal and interest, upon these eleven live-oak sloops-of-war; four or five of which are miserable failures, that in time of war could never run nor chase; and therefore, more calculated to bring disgrace, than to add lustre to the American flag.

Dividing $2,454,000 by 11, we have upwards of $223,000 as the sum, which, under the irresponsible management of a Navy-Board, it requires to build a live-oak sloop-of-war of 700 tons, and to keep her hull and spars in repair, while she renders the State nine years of actual service. I have before me, estimates of the cost of building in private yards, a white-oak sloop-of-war of 700 tons. These estimates were prepared with great care, by the most respectable builders in the country. They state, that to build in one of their yards, for the Government, a white-oak sloop-of-war, coppered and copper-fastened, and to furnish her with spars, rigging, one suit of sails, hawsers, chain cables, anchors and boats, all complete, would cost $68,500. That she will perform *more* than nine years of continued and active service, without any repairs in her hull and spars from decay; and that at the end of that time, she would be worth in exchange for a new one, say $20,000. A white-oak ship as long as she is sound, is as good and as strong as a live-

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oak one. The live-oak frame may be *repaired* longer; but at what rates, you have seen. According to the plan here submitted, and based upon the opinion of the most experienced builders as to the durability of ships, the Navy may be furnished with new white-oak men-of-war, to perform 10 or 12 years of active service, for $48,000, say $50,000, instead of paying as it now does, $223,000 for old live-oak sloops, that like the Indian's gun, 'cost more than they come to.'

The builders at the North have, after bestowing much attention to the subject, politely furnished answers to the following questions, propounded with a view of eliciting information as to the relative economy of live-oak, and white-oak, sloops-of-war.

Quest. 'All a-tanto,' and with one suit of sails, would a white-oak built sloop-of-war of 700 tons cost $70,000?

Ans. She would not cost $70,000.

Quest. Would she last six years without requiring repairs in her hull?

Ans. She would last six years and longer, if well taken care of, without any repairs whatever, except calking.

The Report from the Navy-Board, shows that under the present system, our live-oak sloops-of-war are repaired on an average, once in about three years.

Quest. At the end of six years, and without repairs to her hull from decay, would she be worth $20,000?

Ans. She would be worth $20,000.

Quest. What would a private builder of reputation charge for a white-oak sloop-of-war of 700 tons, (custom-house measurement) if employed to build one or two every year?

Ans. $68,500 for hull and spars, (copper-fastened to load-water-line and coppered,) one suit of sails, rigging, hawsers, chain-cables, anchors and boats.

Quest. How long would she run without repairs being necessary, from decay of hull?

Ans. If well salted on the stocks, and often filled up, with proper care taken to ventilate her, she would last ten or twelve years, without repair from decay.

This Report shows that of eleven live-oak built sloops-of-war, each one has been repaired in her hull and spars on an average, three times in ten years, and at a mean cost of $120,000. Of these, the St. Louis was repaired twice, in eleven years, at a cost of $135,000; the Warren, three times in twelve years, at $152,000; the Vincennes, three times in twelve years, at $178,000. The Falmouth, four times in ten years, at $130,000. The Boston, four times in fifteen years, at $189,000. The John Adams, twice in eight years, at $120,000. The Natchez, four times in nine years, at $130,000, and broken up in her thirteenth year! These are actual results. Contrast them with the merchant-builders' estimates above, and you may get some idea of the extravagance of the system at present pursued in the Navy. That the private builders have not placed their estimates too low, is proved by their willingness to undertake at those rates. Nor will they appear to be at all under the mark, when you are told that the live-oak for the Commissioners' ship, costs about $1 40 per solid foot; the white-oak for the other, about thirty cents; and that the white-oak, not being so hard or so heavy as the live-oak, is easier, and therefore cheaper to work.

The private builders have assigned in their estimates, ten or twelve years, as the average time which one of *their* white-oak sloops-of-war would run without repairs from decay. They are governed in this, by their experience derived from white-oak ships in the merchant service. Their opinion is fully sustained in the case of the United-States man-of-war schooner Dolphin, which being placed beyond the reach of the repairing system at home, continued in active service abroad, for fifteen or sixteen years, without any, or but trifling repairs upon her hull; though she had her masts renewed once, and her hull painted and calked. There is in the Navy no other vessel that has been let alone long enough, as the Dolphin was, to show how long live-oak men-of-war, though I believe she was of white-oak, will run with safety without repairs. But, if you will look to our white-oak merchantmen, and see how long they run before they require repairs—they go more deeply laden than our men-of-war, navigate the same seas, and are exposed to the same gales and tempests, and they last from ten to fourteen years—if you will compare the cost and rates of repairs upon the same ship-of-war before, and after, the present system came in vogue—*e. g.* the repairs of the Frigate United States, as far as could be ascertained for this Report, were, you recollect, $68,000 for twenty-four years under the old system, and upwards of $750,000 for twenty years under the present—and upwards of half a million, in thirteen years, for the Brandywine, under the Navy-Board; in short, if you will consider that within the last six or seven years, the annual appropriations for 'repairs' have advanced, from a half, to two millions of dollars,* or *three hundred* per cent, while the active force afloat has been increased only about 20 per cent, you cannot fail to be, as I have been, amazed at the conclusion to which you will be led. Are not these facts enough to alarm the friends of the Navy, and to convince those who are most wedded to the present system, that there is in it something defective and radically wrong?

As broad as the Navy-Board is, and as many as are the sins that are piled upon it, it does not ap-

* *Two millions of dollars:* half a million is for building steamers; therefore, it leaves but a million and a half properly chargeable to 'repairs.'

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pear just to charge it too with *making* ships rot. But that our live-oak ships, from some cause, do decay more rapidly than they used to do, at any rate they are *repaired* more frequently and extensively now, than formerly; and that without repairs, they do not last as long by years, as white-oak merchantmen, are facts disputed by no one. These facts are sustained by the united experience of the whole Naval and Commercial marine, and fully proven by the statistics derived from this Report, as far as these may be taken as evidence. Of late years, it is true, a few remarkable instances of early decay have taken place among the New-York packets. Some ascribed it to their tight ceilings; others, to the circumstance of their carrying kentledge ballast, which not being removed as often as it ought to have been, for cleaning and ventilating the ship, caused decay by the accumulation of dirt, foul air, and all sorts of filth along the parts it occupied. Our sloops-of-war are all ballasted with kentledge, and have iron tanks besides, and from the beginning to the end of a cruise, I have never known the hold of one of these ships to be broken out, cleaned and aired; and if the accumulation of filth in a vessel's hold would promote decay in a merchantman, much more would it in a man-of-war with tanks, where it collects in larger quantities, and is undisturbed in its action for years at a time. Though others, and perhaps with more reason, ascribe this decay in the packets to the use of what is called canal timber, which is rafted through the Erie and Champlain canals. They think that the durability of this timber is impaired by being so long in fresh, and many times in muddy water.

Timber for the use of the Navy, at least at the Building-Yards of which I can speak advisedly, is covered up with mud in what are called timber-docks for two or three years. It is then taken out, sawed, and put under sheds to dry. Here it is damaged and split by the frost and air; and when it comes to be taken out for use, at least one in every four pieces is condemned as useless, on account of rents. Such is the experience of one of the most intelligent officers of the Navy, who, himself, has had much to do with such timber. Besides being thus prepared for rotting, after it is put on the ship, the heavy loss from rents serves to swell the cost of our men-of-war.

You recollect the elaborate argument made to Congress in 1820,* by the Commissioners of the Navy-Board, about *certain acescent fermentative qualities of the sap juices of timber*, and proving that seasoning by immersion was highly destructive to ship-timber? For the information and amusement of your readers, who may not have that celebrated document at hand, I shall make a few extracts from it.

"Water swells and expands the pores of wood, and the "fibres when thus expanded become still more distended "by remaining saturated, and, in a frozen state, the pores "become so fixed in an unnatural state of expansion as to "lose all power of contraction. This is the condition of "the oak and pine imported into England from Canada; "and to these causes the best writers attribute the 'dry-"rot' so destructive to British vessels. The Canada tim-"ber is brought down the St. Lawrence in large rafts, con-"tinues months in water, and in that saturated state is "landed and exposed to frost; every attempt to season it, "under cover, is unavailing; its pores never close again, "and when used as ship-timber dry-rot ensues."

Notwithstanding these facts, a costly timber-dock, walled in with faced granite, and covering a surface of 200,000 square feet, [four or five acres,] has been since built at Portsmouth, New-Hampshire, where the timber is saturated, taken out and sawed and put under sheds, to have its pores opened by the frosts of New-England.

"Experiments have been made to arrest the dry-rot in "ships, by sinking them for months in *salt* water, but with-"out success;—the texture of the wood was found to be "essentially injured by being thus water soaked, and it be-"come more subject to disease than *before* it was sunk."

Among other considerations the following facts were adduced as sustaining the objections to immersion.

"In the early periods of the British marine, the custom "was to transport all the Navy timber to the Dock-Yards "in vessels; it was taken immediately to the Yards and "there landed in a *dry* state, without having been subject "to immersion.

"In the year 1515, the Great Henry was launched; and, "without having sustained any essential repairs, she was "fit for service in 1553, when she was accidentally burnt.

"In the year 1636, the Sovereign of the Seas was "launched; in 1696, it was determined to repair her; the "frame was found perfectly sound, and, according to Black-"burn, 'the timber was so firm and hard as almost to re-"sist the edge of tools.'

"The timber with which these vessels were built having "been conveyed to the Building-Yards in vessels and not "in *rafts*, and having consequently been delivered into the "Yards in a *dry* state, has been considered one of the es-"sential causes of their durability. It is a remarkable fact "that there are at this time but two vessels in the English "Navy as old as the 'Sovereign of the Seas' was when she "was burnt.

"Blackburn remarks, 'the Rhine-oak brought down that "river from the forests in large rafts remaining for months "soaked in water, and afterwards landed and exposed to "intense frosts, sustains very material injury; the fibres of "the wood being expanded in so powerful a degree, lose "their natural texture and remain porous; and the water "it imbibes changing its state and becoming corrosive, dry-"rot ensues.' The French ships built at Antwerp a few "years since with the Rhine oak, were found in a state of "decay from the dry-rot,—some of them even while build-"ing.

"The oaks of the United States, excepting probably the "live-oak," continue the Commissioners, "are sufficiently "porous to become saturated in a short time; and, if exposed "in this state to the action of frost or of extreme heat, *simi-"lar effects would inevitably result.* The effect of heat and "cold is known to be similar in many respects: they both "penetrate into substances in the same manner. A cannon "for instance filled with water securely confined in it, will "burst upon being exposed either to extreme heat, or in-

* Page 677, et seq. of the vol. State Papers devoted to Naval affairs.

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"tense frost; and it will be remembered, that wood is far "less tenacious than iron, and far more liable to the action "of heat and cold."

This is *philosophy* certainly, and a unique illustration of the properties of heat; but this is not the place for philosophical disquisitions, therefore to the conclusion of the Navy Commissioners in 1820:

"Immersion then may, to a certain extent, be resorted "to from *necessity*, but not from *choice* in *any* case."

Would it be believed, that in the face of all this evidence against immersion, and in spite of such conclusive arguments, that untold sums—yes sir, untold sums have been expended—for the Commissioners don't know what sums—have been expended by that Navy-Board, since that letter was written, in the construction of Timber-Docks for water-seasoning? For my own part, I am not prepared to condemn water-seasoning—practically, I know very little about it. But whatever be the cause of decay in our men-of-war at the present day, the effect is most obvious, destructive and ruinous; it is enough to call the attention of the whole country to the Navy, not only in this respect, but as it regards other matters. Why is it that our men-of-war require such frequent and extensive repairs?—that the expenses of the Navy are greater in proportion now than they have ever been?—that it takes so much more to repair than to build?—that it takes so long to fit out our ships?—that there are so many, many failures in ship-building?—that it costs so much more to build a ship in New-York and Norfolk, than in Boston and Philadelphia? These are questions which require, and it is to be hoped will receive, the most earnest attention of the new Secretary. A Commission of the most intelligent officers, appointed to inquire into these and other subjects affecting the interests of the service, would doubtless collect a mass of information of the most valuable kind. When the Navy of England had fallen upon evil times, such a step, on the part of Mr. Pitt, as the one here proposed, led to its complete restoration, and gave it the impulse which made it what it now is. The great object with reformers is to know where and what are the rocks, shoals and sands, upon which the Navy has struck. This information can only be derived from a Commission, appointed to make the necessary examinations. The practical results of such an investigation properly conducted, would, as assuredly as it were instituted, lead to the restoration of a wholesome system, and to the complete establishment once more, of health, and stength, and vigor to the American Navy. A similar procedure led to similar results with regard to the English Navy; and why should not the same means be adequate to the same end in the United States?

But to return to the builders' estimates for white-oak men-of-war on the plan of *no repairs*. As economical as this plan certainly is, and though it be vastly preferable, in every respect, to the one now in vogue, I am not prepared to say that it is the most economical, the most efficient, or the most desirable plan, that may be devised for building the public armed ships. Much may be said in its favor, it is true, and it carries on its face, at least enough favorably to recommend it to the attentive consideration of those, with whom may rest the power, or the means, of procuring for it a trial. Should any such be disposed to advocate the experiment, (as it is hoped they will), of building white-oak sloops-of-war at private yards, and of exchanging them for new ones, when they want repairs, the names of the builders whose estimates are quoted, and other information on the subject, may be obtained, by applying at the office of the Southern Literary Messenger.

The builders say that a white-oak sloop-of-war would run ten or twelve years without repair from decay. To be certainly within the estimates, let six years be taken as the limit—at the end of which time it is supposed she would be worth rather over than under $20,000. A few years ago it was common for the smaller class packets, of from 400 to 500 tons, after they had been run off the line, to be sold as whalers. The average price of such ships, six or eight years old, was $16,000. It is true that the large masts, sails and spars of a sloop-of-war—her thick sides, heavy beams and knees, would operate against her as a merchantman, and therefore, have a depreciating effect upon her value for commercial purposes. The heavy spars and sails, by requiring a strong force to manage them, would make her more expensive than a regular merchantman of the same size—her thick sides would interfere disadvantageously to her owners, with her customhouse-measurement; and her large beams and knees would break in upon the stowage of her cargo. Though these latter objections might be in a great measure removed, if the Government in making the sale, would assign for the Register a rate of tonnage, which would be some index to her actual capacity. With these views of the case, it would appear that the estimate of $20,000 is full low for a fine ship of 700 tons, coppered and copper-fastened, and only six years old. But if these white-oak vessels would last only for three years, and then sell for but $20,000, they would then be much cheaper than our live-oak built sloops now are. To build and keep the hull and spars of one of these in repair for nine years, has cost, as the Report shows, upwards of $223,000, or $75,000 for three years, whereas the white-oak sloop would cost less than $50,000.

The immense expense shown by this Report to be attendant upon the present plan of building and repairing ships for the Navy, cannot be dwelt upon too strongly. It is rife with abuses, and of itself affords cause sufficient to justify the appointment of a Commission. Much abuse, and many inju-

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ries to the public service, are no doubt owing to the manner in which labor is performed at our Navy-Yards; it is there paid for by the day, and not by the job. Hence the habit among the laborers of spinning out their work—hence the spirit of emulation among them, in doing little; and hence the boastings among them, that work there, would be play elsewhere; that the putting of a lock on a door, &c. will pass as a day's work.

It is important that work for the Navy should be performed on good materials, and in the best manner. I profess to know but little, in detail, as to the system which obtains in the management of labor at our Navy-Yards. I only know that the present plan is an expensive and a tedious one; and have been told that mechanics there, while employed in the Yard, can find time to *build houses* for themselves. Therefore, in venturing to offer any suggestions on this subject, I do it with distrust of myself, and with the caution, that the suggestions will be received with allowance, and only for what they are worth; though I can perceive no reason why labor in our building-yards, may not be performed as well and as faithfully, by the job, as by the day. The ships that were built on the Lakes by Eckford, during the last war, were built by the job. He would contract with one man to plank up one side, and with another to plank up the other; with one to make a mast, &c.—the work was to be done within such a time, and this gave an impulse to labor, which you would seek in vain at any of our Yards, or under any circumstances, under the present system. Trees that greeted with their tall heads, the first rays of the morning sun, were felled in the forest, and before the shadows of their fellows were lengthened with the evening rays, their trunks had become part and parcel of a ship. From early dawn, till late at night, the axe, the hammer and the saw of the carpenter at work, were heard in busy concert. I can perceive no reason why a similar plan may not, at least, be tried in one of our Navy-Yards. A ship is to be built—her frame has been cut to moulds in Florida—they are in store, and only require to be dressed and put together. Let notice be given, and contract made with the lowest bidder for setting up, and putting together the frame, within a limited time. There are the officers of the Yard with the Constructor, to see that none but good and sound timber be furnished to the workmen, that the model be observed, and the work be performed in a proper manner.

When that is done, contracts may be made in a similar way for planking up—laying decks—making spars and masts—building boats—calking, coppering, painting, making sails, fitting rigging, &c. according to the despatch required. Under such a system, properly managed, it would be difficult to imagine how it could take two or three years to fit out one ship, as was the case with the Ohio, and has been the case with others. The work would all be done within the Yards; nothing could be taken out; the contracting mechanics could have the free use of the shops, sheds and lofts. And to ensure an economical working up of the materials, I can see no reason why each contractor should not be charged at Government cost with the quantity of materials necessary for his contract. And if any remain after the work is done, they may be taken back at the same rate.

After this manner, I conceive, white-oak ships-of-war might be built better and more economically in the Public Dock-Yards, than they can be in Private Ship-Yards. But, even if there were no pecuniary advantages in favor of either of the methods proposed for building white-oak sloops-of-war, and all smaller vessels, on the plan of 'no repairs;' still, either would be greatly preferable to the present *repairing* plan. If, under either of the plans proposed, we should by any accident have the Navy saddled with such worthless 'clumps' as the Warren, the Lexington, the Falmouth, the Concord, &c., have proved to be; we should, instead of having the service burthened with them for fifteen or twenty years, perhaps longer, be sure to get rid of them by selling, as soon as they should require *repairs*. Then, their places would be supplied by new ships after the most approved models, bringing with them always the latest improvements, &c. in model, construction, fixtures, armament, etc. Were the two plans equally balanced as to advantages in other respects, this consideration should be enough to turn the scale, at least to a certain extent, in favor of the plan of 'no repairs.'

From a first class sloop-of-war up, the Navy can boast of no ship afloat, in the construction of the model of which, the architect could avail himself of any improvements that have been introduced in ship-building for the last fifteen or twenty years. The models on which all of our first class sloops-of-war, (except perhaps the Cyane and Levant,) are built, were constructed as far back as 1825, if not farther. Those of our newest frigates and 74s afloat, and for aught I know, of those too on the stocks, were constructed prior to 1820, and I believe, some of them, as far back as 1813. Great Britain now has among her new line-of-battle ships, her frigates and sloops-of-war, vessels far superior to any of their class in the American Navy. This could not be said twenty years ago. Most of our ships are now, what they were then; whereas England, by suffering her old models to sink into disuse, has substituted new ones in their places, and by this means has taken the lead of us. During, and immediately after, the last war, we took a step beyond her, and built double-banked frigates, with flush decks fore and aft. These frigates in a sea-way, would have proved more than a match for many of her old line-of-battle-ships. She saw the improvement and profited by our ex-

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ample. She has not only razeed her old 74s and made heavy double-banked frigates of them, but she has taken a step beyond us in building vessels of every class, particularly her new flush double-banked frigates, which having more beam, and carrying the sills of their ports higher, would, in a sea-way have the advantage of one of our ships. And in this way it has happened that we, with our men-of-war, are lagging behind other nations with theirs.

I do not wish you to infer, from what I have said above, that I advocate the building of 'first rates' and Frigates of white-oak, and selling them; instead of building them of live-oak, and *repairing* them. When such large vessels are concerned, the statistics furnished by the Report, do not constitute a basis, on which any opinion may properly be founded as to the relative merits of the two plans. The dimensions of such ships, render them too unwieldly for traders; and if, when worn, they were put up at auction, they would only sell for what could be made out of their timber and fastenings, by breaking them up; and, judging from their great first cost, it would certainly be the cheaper plan to build of live-oak, and to *repair;* particularly those intended for constant service. But economy, sound policy, and national interests, all require, in my humble opinion, that those of our ships which are held in reserve for war, and all those which may be built and launched only in case of war, should be built of white, and not of live, oak.

A white-oak frigate or 74, would last for six or eight years at least; which is quite as long as any war that we shall have, will probably continue. If she should fall into the enemy's hands, she could not last long enough to be turned against us with much effect; and, at the end of the war, when we come to dismantle and lay up in ordinary those ships, which should not be required for service in peace, a live-oak ship would be as valueless as one of white-oak—for both would probably rot before they were wanted for another war. And if when they were wanted, the live-oak ship should not be entirely rotten, the chances are, that the expense of taking care of her, together with the probable cost of repairs, would more than suffice for building a new one of white-oak. The new one, too, would have in her favor the advantages of any improvements that should have taken place since the commencement of the first war. This Report shows that it cost nearly as much to fit the live-oak-built Ohio for sea, after she had been in the water 16 years, as it ought to have taken to build two such ships—both of live-oak. And the cost, let it be recollected, of white-oak, is about 30 cents per cubic foot, and of live-oak, about $1 40. Hence many reasons, palpable, obvious and amply sufficient, will appear, why ships that are required to last only through the average duration of a war, should be built of white-oak, instead of live-oak. Being for temporary use, they should be built cheap, and with a view to that special purpose.

Under the law for the 'gradual increase of the Navy,' there are on the stocks, four live-oak line-of-battle-ships, and six or seven frigates, which probably will never be launched, except in case of war. They are all under cover, and, being well protected from the weather, the white-oak and cedar and locust in them, will probably endure as long in that situation, as the live-oak itself; or as long, at any rate, as articles of furniture made of such materials, would endure in a house. Besides these ships, contracts have been made, and mostly completed, for the delivery of the live-oak for fifteen ships-of-the-line; eighteen frigates; fifteen sloops-of-war; nine steamers, and nine brigs.*

For illustration: Let us suppose the present state of affairs between this country and England, to result in a declaration of war; all these ships would be completed, launched and equipped for sea immediately. If any of them should be captured, the enemy gains a good and substantial live-oak ship, to be turned against us in war—or to be exhibited to the world as a trophy, in peace. When hostilities cease, the services of the remaining part of this live-oak fleet, will no longer be required; and it will be laid up to rot; or so far to decay, that when war comes again, more money will be required to equip it for sea, than it would take to build and equip a new, and a better, and a stronger force, from our white-oak forests. How much more wise, judicious and economical then, would be the policy of collecting white, instead of live-oak timber, for our *reserve* ships! Those frigates and ships-of-the-line that are intended for constant service in peace, should be constructed of the best and most lasting materials; but those which are intended only for the temporary purposes of war, should be constructed with a view to those purposes alone. On the Lakes, the ships which were found on the stocks at the cessation of hostilities with England, were being built of timber green from the forests. They were put under cover, and when last heard of, they were as sound and as good, (in fact better, for their timber had become seasoned,) as they were when first put together.

The Report states, that the steam-ship Fulton was *building in* 1838–'39, *at New-York, Boston and Washington!* The Navy Register for each of the years 1838–'39–'40 and '41,—distinctly states, that this vessel *was built at New-York, in* 1837. I merely wish to point out the discrepancy between these official statements, that those who can, may, reconcile them. Nor shall I say a word about the curious process by which she was built at three different places; except that it appears to be a very expensive way of building ships,—and therefore, it

* Paper F. accompanying Annual Report of Sec. Navy, 5th Dec. 1840.

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is hoped, will be discontinued under the new administration. Though this vessel is but twenty tons larger than a sloop-of-war, that *ought*, in the opinion of the Commissioners of the Navy-Board, to have cost but $85,000, completely rigged and equipped—her cost is stated in the Report, at $333,770 77—which, it is said in a note, is the "Total for building and altering to the *close* of 1839." This note would seem to imply, that there is a further account in reserve, for "building and altering," *after* "the close of 1839." If there be, I leave the amount of it for you to conjecture; for the 'Bag' contains nothing that can throw any light on the subject. It is true, that a steamer, on account of engines, boilers, machinery and smoke-stacks, ought to cost more than a sail vessel of equal size. Because this one is *three per cent.* larger in her hull than a sloop-of-war; let it be allowed that this part of her, cost *twice* as much as the *hull* of a sloop-of-war ought to cost. This calculation would make the very liberal allowance of $92,000 for the hull of the Fulton. Her engines, boilers, smoke-stacks, and machinery of all kinds, cost $137,000; and her outfits $9,000 = $146,000.* This leaves, as the cost of her hull and spindle-masts, the enormous sum of $187,000; instead of the very liberal allowance of $92,000!

In 1838, the immense cost of this vessel attracted the attention of Congress; and there was a rumor that this cost would be greatly increased by certain alterations then proposed for her. Congress demanded to know what sum she had cost, and what would be the cost of the contemplated alterations. In June of that year, the Commissioners reported, through the Secretary of the Navy, that the "alterations and additions proposed for the steamer Fulton will not exceed $4,500."† And that her aggregate cost was $295,598,59.‡

This Report, however, shows the total cost "for building and altering, to the close of 1839," to be $333,770 77. Wherefore it appears, that the "alterations and additions proposed for the steamer Fulton," instead of *not exceeding* $4,500, as the Commissioners reported, went beyond $38,000—more than 800 per cent. over the estimates! Can any thing illustrate more clearly than this, the complete irresponsibility, aye, the total unaccountability, of the Navy-Board? It is the nature of abuses in public affairs, unless checked, to increase from year to year; and these in the Navy have been upward, and onward, and true to their nature—as you have already seen, and as I shall endeavor further to show

"The proper armament of the Fulton is four or six long sixty-four pounders."§

In 1831-'32, the Commissioners submitted estimates to Congress, of the cost of two steam-batteries to mount *twelve* forty-two pounders each. If not a steamboat such as the Fulton is, (for in official communications from the Navy Department she is sometimes termed a *steam-battery*), I cannot say what these steam-batteries were to be like. At any rate, their whole cost, including the 12 guns, was then *estimated* at $55,897 each.* In answer to a resolution of the Senate, concerning the probable cost of steam or floating *batteries*, the Commissioners of the Navy-Board, replied, March 2nd, 1836, that the whole cost of twenty-five steamers, would be $5,625,000,† or $225,000 each.

On the 27th November, 1839, the Commissioners reported to Congress, "The Board are of opinion "that forty steamers will be required in the course "of a few years; although these will probably "vary in size and cost, it will not be safe to esti-"mate their average cost, when prepared for ser-"vice, at less than $335,000 each, which would "require the gross sum of *thirteen millions* four "hundred thousand dollars, for the forty steamers "proposed."‡

Thus in the course of nine years, the *estimated* cost of like vessels, has risen from $55,000 to $335,000. And in this you may perceive how rapidly the abuses of the present system have grown, and how alarmingly they are spreading themselves over the service. Even the Commissioners cannot keep pace with them. In these last estimates, they took the actual cost of the Fulton, as what would be the average cost of each of forty others; but you have seen that their estimates have invariably fallen short of actual costs. Referring to the past, and judging by actual results, if these forty steamers were authorized to be built under the present system, their actual cost, if things continue to go on as they have done, would not be short of twenty millions of dollars. Is the country prepared to stand such rates?

In 1825, the Commissioners estimated that ten sloops-of-war of the first class, would cost $850,000. The appropriation was made, but they cost nearly a *million and a quarter*. With these actual results, as a basis for another calculation, the Commissioners estimated in 1836, that $400,000, with the materials on hand, would be enough to build six sloops-of-war of the third class,—in 1839, they report◊ that all the money was gone, and but *five* of the vessels built. In 1836, they submit estimates to Congress, in which they propose that there shall be "kept afloat six ships of the line, eleven frigates, fifteen "sloops-of-war, four steamers, and ten smaller vessels [a "force of nearly 1400 guns]. The annual amount neces-"sary to keep this force in a state of repair, and to supply

* Report from Navy Commissioners, to 25th Congress, 2nd Session, H. R. Doc. 423.
† Doc. 423, H. R. 2nd Session, 25th Congress.
‡ Doc. 424, H. R. 2nd Session, 25th Congress.
§ Doc. 423, H. R. 2nd Session, 25th Congress.

* Paper L of Doc. No. 2, 1st Session, 22nd Congress.
† Doc 243, H. R. 1st Session, 24th Congress.
‡ Senate Doc. 120, 1st Session, 26th Congress.
◊ Annual Report of Secretary Navy, and accompanying Documents, 1839.

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"the wear and tear of stores of [thirty-nine] cruising ves-"sels [upwards of 900 guns] is estimated at $950,000."*

Now again for the growth of abuses :—

In their estimates of 1839, the Commissioner proposed, that in 1840, there should be thirty-four cruising vessels of all kinds, carrying a force of seven hundred and fifty-two guns, kept in service : for the 'Repairs' of which, $1,000,000 was asked and granted—only twenty-six of them, however, carrying but five hundred and forty-four guns, were kept in service,† and the amount drawn out of the Treasury for Repairs, &c. that year, was $1,316,170 44.‡

In 1840, it is proposed to keep in service for 1841, a force of 752 guns. And the estimates under the head of 'repairs,' &c. call for $1,425,000.§ Congress grants $2,000,000, of which about half a million is for "increase." And there you have evidence of the growing nature of the abuses with which the Navy is afflicted. The yearly 'Repairs' for cruising vessels, having increased within the last four or five years, from the rate of about $1000 to $3000 per gun. What but a breaking up of the present system can stay those evils, or prevent their further growth?

Again I am indebted to private builders, of well established reputation, for valuable information on the subject of ship-building.

Ques. In a private Yard, what could a man-of-war steamer, of the size of the Fulton, (United States steamer) say 720 tons, custom-house, be built for of white-oak, locust, &c.?

Ans. $190,000 for hull and spars, rigging, sails, hawsers, chain-cables, anchors, water-tanks, boats, engines and boilers complete.

Ques. How long will a steamer (white-oak) last in the New-York and Providence line?

Ans. Ten years without repairs from decay.

I have also the estimates of other builders who have been engaged in building men-of-war steamers. They state that such a vessel as the Fulton can be built of white-oak, in a private yard, for $150,000. Compare these with the cost of the Fulton, and with the Commissioners' estimates; and then decide as to the relative advantages of the white oak plan proposed, and of the live-oak plan, as it is under the present system.

The cost of a Mississippi steamer of 300 tons, is stated by the newspapers to be $30,000. And I suppose men-of-war steamers may be built cheaper there, than they can be on the Atlantic coast. That is the land of steamboats; and Government should establish a Dock-Yard on that river for building public steamers. It is in the midst of inexhaustible forests of the best timber; and it waters a region that abounds in all the materials that can be required for such purposes. The New-Orleans bar, at all times, affords a draft sufficient, and more than barely sufficient, for the ready egress and ingress for these steamers. And the Dock-Yard being situated some distance up from the mouth, would at all times, be secure from an enemy. But more of this presently, for it is an important subject.

Some of the most intelligent officers of the Navy, are of opinion that public economy, true policy and our real national interests require, that all our men-of-war steamers, should not only be built of white-oak, for the present, but even of cheaper materials, if cheaper materials of sufficient strength may anywhere be found. As yet, the application of steam-power to ships-of-war, is new; all our steamers are but the first trials of an experiment. If any prove failures, as many probably will, and as the Fulton has, it is certainly an object no less worthy of the consideration of political economists, than of officers of the Navy, to make the cost of these failures, fall as lightly as possible, upon the public Treasury. This ship affords a dearly purchased, but a most apt and pointed commentary on the folly of the one plan, and the wisdom of the other. With the money which the live-oak Fulton has already cost, at least three, if not four, white-oak steamers of her size, could have been furnished, one after the other, to the Navy, for use and experiment. When the first had been in the service till she wanted repairs, she, with or without her engines, could have been exchanged for a new one, that would have brought with her all the improvements, which a trial with the first had pointed out. The experience obtained in the course of several year's service, and observation in her, would in like manner be conveyed for improvements to her successor—and when the maximum degree of perfection had centered in one—her model, &c. could then be transferred to a live-oak frame, that would grace our waters, be an honor to the Navy, and a matter of pride with the nation. Had the Fulton been of white-oak, she would have rotted and been sold in the course of a few years more; and then, we might have had her place supplied with a new and a better vessel—but as she is—she is a blotch on the waters of our harbors, a burlesque on ocean-steamers, and a disgrace to the Navy.

In January, 1838, Capt. Perry was ordered to sea, for the purpose of giving this steamer a trial. On the 15th of that month he wrote to the Commissioners of the Navy—

"I have this day received orders from the Hon. Secretary "of the Navy, to take my departure with this vessel (the "Fulton) under my command, from New-York, and proceed "to cruise upon the coast. In acknowledgment of these "instructions, I have stated my opinion that the Fulton was "not adapted for service at sea, but should nevertheless "sail to-morrow to execute so far as it might be practicable "the orders of the Department; and to do so, I beg leave

* Navy Commissioners to Secretary Navy, March 2nd, 1836.

† Paper H. accompanying Annual Report of Secretary Navy, December 5th, 1840, Doc. 2, H. R. 2nd Session, 26th Congress.

‡ Doc. 88, H. R. 2nd Session, 26th Congress.

§ Paper D. accompanying Annual Report of Secretary Navy, December, 1840.

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"to observe to the Commissioners that it will be necessary "to establish *deposites of fuel at such intermediate points within* "*the range of my cruising ground, as will enable me to furnish* "*this vessel with the requisite supplies.*"

So you perceive, that to enable a squadron of such vessels to cruise at sea, the ocean must first be made black with colliers to supply it with fuel. But this is not all. Capt. Perry continues—

"Her wheel guards are within *twenty* inches of the water. "This, the Commissioners will perceive, is *rather* deep for "a vessel open on deck, to withstand a gale on our coast. "I shall, however, be careful, not to incur any unnecessary "risks, until I have fairly tested her qualities: nor CAN I, "*until deposites of fuel are established*, proceed *far* from "New-York."*

After she had returned from this perilous trip, for cruise or voyage, it cannot be called, Capt. Perry wrote to the Commissioners—

"Her cardinal defects are want of length and *buoyancy*."†

Such is the character of this dear-bought *thing*, built at double charges, framed of live-oak, and therefore likely to be saddled upon the service for many, many years. Had such an experiment been undertaken by any individual on his own account, he would have procured for the first trial the cheapest vessel which could be made to answer the purpose, that in case of a failure, the loss might fall lightly upon him. And why should a rule so obviously wise and prudent, and so plain too, not obtain when the Government is concerned? Had the Fulton proved to be as perfect as the most perfect man-of-war steamer that is, still, it were unwise to build her of live-oak; because, it is by no means improbable, that the discoveries and improvements which are almost daily being made in the means of steam-warfare and navigation, would have rendered such a vessel comparatively useless, long before the Fulton will be condemned as unfit for '*repairs*.'

Why such a plan has not been proposed and adopted in England and France, is obvious enough. Wood with them is scarce—with us abundant and cheap. Indeed, England has felt the importance, and does practise the economy of materials to the fullest extent. From the scarcity, and consequently the cost of ship-timber to her, she puts no more in her ships than is sufficient to give the necessary strength—her men-of-war are not nearly so stoutly built as ours. She uses timber sparingly, we crowd it in. The beams and knees in an English man-of-war, are neither as stout nor as close together, as they are in an American vessel of the same class. Our ships have 'carlings and ledges;' many of theirs none—our decks are laid of plank sixty feet long, theirs of pieces fifteen or twenty feet only—our plank too, has an inch more thickness than theirs. Another great advantage to be derived by building war steamers of white-oak, and exchanging them for new ones instead of repairing them—is to be found in the consideration—that, instead of lagging behind all the world with our expensive live-oak failures, we should then be able to keep pace with, if not to take the lead of, every other nation in steamships.

So long as the plan of steam-warfare is open to any very considerable improvements, and certainly while it is yet in its infancy, the advantages of making the Revenue service a part of the Navy are manifold—the policy and propriety of it, doubly urgent and wise. The economy of the measure was pointed out, satisfactorily it was thought, in a former 'Scrap' from the 'Bag.' But some have denied the economy of the arrangement there proposed, on the grounds, that if the Revenue service were transferred from the Treasury to the Navy Department, the cost to the Government would be the same; for the expenses of that service, whether chargeable to one department or another, would in either case be defrayed by the Government, and in the end amount to but the same thing. To such, I beg leave to offer an illustration; for illustration, if correctly adduced, is at all times better than argument, especially in the mouth of one who is slow of speech.

Government employs marines at $6 or $8 a month. A part of their duties on shore *used* to be, to stand guard and keep watch at our Navy-Yards. From some cause or other, but certainly without any regard to usage or the law, watchmen at $18 or $20 a month, perhaps more, were substituted for marines at some of the Yards; and the marines on shore were thus left without any thing at all to do, but to pipe-clay their belts, &c. They had guarded the public property as faithfully as it can be guarded; this duty they had performed ever since we had a Navy and marines to serve it; and they had discharged well all the duties now required of the watchmen: and surely if they were allowed again to return to their posts in the Yard, there would be no longer any need of watchmen, whose wages of $20 per month, would be thereby saved to the government. Whether the marines stand guard or not, the government has to support them,—and if they do not stand guard, they have nothing else on shore to do.

So too with the Navy and the Revenue Service. The law directs that there shall be maintained a squadron of armed ships along our coast. The Navy, to be in a condition for protecting the country in war, is provided with more ships and a greater number of officers, than are barely requisite for the duties required of the Navy in times of profound peace; and whether in actual service or not, this surplus force, like the marines on shore, must be supported. The business of the Revenue Service, is perfectly compatible with the duties of the home squadron; and if, instead of being performed by a separate corps, it were performed by this idle Naval force that has to be maintained at any rate, clearly there would be a saving to the Government of the

* See Doc. 423, H. R. 2nd Sess. 25th Congress.
† See Doc. 423, H. R. 2nd Sess. 25th Congress.

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whole present cost of the Revenue Service. That service is supported out of the Revenue, without any more distinct or specific appropriation. And as there has been so much abuse where appropriations are special and fixed in amount, you may imagine, if you can, what has been the abuse here, where there are no limits except those of the Revenue itself.*

But advantages more solid even than the one of saving, would inure from such an arrangement: the Revenue would be more efficiently protected; and an admirable *guarda-costa*, sufficient to keep off any blockading squadron, would be stretched along the sea-board, prepared for any emergency, and always ready to act.

This coast-guard, consisting for the most part of small class steamers, built of *white-oak* for the present, would open a fine field for the Government to carry on, at a cheap rate, its experiments on steam and war-steamers. It would afford an excellent school for training marksmen and engineers, and for giving skill and practice to officers for the American Navy. And above all, it would afford to officers and men the grateful employment of assisting the shipwrecked mariner on our coast.

I have some statistics relating to the losses by wreck, which annually occur on the Atlantic sea-board. The number of wrecks and cast-aways, is astounding. It averages from four hundred to five hundred a year. In January, 1839, there were ninety-one American vessels, of all sizes, wrecked on the Atlantic coast,—making on an average, a case of shipwreck once in every eight hours for a month! In September, 1838, there were seventeen in the vicinity of Cape Henlopen alone.

While we employ our squadrons to afford relief and protection to the citizen abroad, not so much as a gun-boat from the Navy, has ever been regularly employed for that purpose at home. The tight-built steamers of the *guarda-costa*, sallying out from their several stations, to scour the coast immediately after every gale, would rescue life and property to an amount that is not dreamed of. In 1838, the little di-dapper Wave, a small schooner, employed on the coast of Florida by the War Department, afforded relief, and rendered services to the shipwrecked sailor in his straits, which

> "——are as rich with praise
> As is the ooze and bottom of the deep,
> With sunken wrecks and sunless treasures."

Lieutenant M'Laughlin reporting his proceedings in that schooner at that time, among other things, said—

"In connection with these duties, the discharge of others "of a more pleasing character devolved upon us.

"The brig Bogota, from New-Orleans, knocked her rudder off on Carysford reef; hung it for her, and sent her to "sea.

"Found the wreck of the brig Alna, of Portland, Maine, "in possession of a small party of Indians. Her crew had "been murdered, with the exception of two.

"The brig Exit, from Baltimore, ashore on Sombrero "reef; assisted to get her off.

"The steamer Wilmington, wrecked fifty miles north of "Cape Florida. Saved the crew and passengers, thirty in "number, and landed them at Key-West.

"Saved the crew and passengers, forty in number, of the "Spanish brig Triumfante; burnt the wreck, and landed "them at Key-West."

The Jersey shore, and the stormy capes of the 'Old North State,' are as rife as the reefs of Florida with wreck and disaster. A few steamers to look after them, would be, not less fortunate than the little Wave;—and so to apply the charities of the Government, would be perfectly consistent with the Revenue duties of those steamers. Our Revenue cutters may be now seen lying at their anchors for weeks at a time. Were they the steamers proposed, they might at any time scour a hundred miles or two of coast, and be back before they were missed.

From the time the shepherd-boy went forth with his sling against the giant of Gath, till "the villanous saltpetre was digged out—," it was not uncommon for opposing armies to send forth each its champion, that the fortunes of the day might be decided by single combat. On such occasions, the battle was to the strong: or if ever to the weak, to the weak made strong by an holy ægis. And so it has ever been with men-of-war on the ocean; their strength has always been reckoned by their size, and in direct proportion to the number and calibre of their guns. By the invention of fire-arms, a deadly weapon, which required *skill*, not strength, in its management, was placed in the hands of champion knights; the weak and the feeble were thus made as strong as the strongest in battle; and in the single combat, the chances of victory or escape, were made inversely to the proportions of size—advantages all leaning on the side of the smaller in stature. If accounts be true, the invention of the Paixhans gun and hollow-shot, will give to the smaller ship, in the single-handed fight at sea, the same advantages over the larger one, which pistols give a small and slender man, over his stout and lusty antagonist, in a duel.

I have never had an opportunity of witnessing the effect of a hollow-shot discharged into a ship from one of these guns. But if the experiments made with them in the harbor of Brest were fairly conducted, and if the results be correctly reported, (and there is no reason for supposing they were not), victory must always perch upon the banner of that ship, which shall fairly lodge the first shot in the sides of her antagonist.

I quote the effect of some of these shot, fired from a distance of eight hundred and fifty, to one

*The law creating this service, says, it shall be *supported out of the Revenue of the United States*. No appropriation is ever made for it.

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thousand two hundred and eighty, yards, into the Pacificateur, an 80 gun ship.

The first shot struck low—made a hole of eight and a half inches diameter in the ship's side—tore off two feet of the inner plank,—then exploding, made a hole two or three feet square in the orlop deck—knocked away and shattered to atoms more than one hundred and sixty feet of timber.

The third shot entered between two ports—tore off a large knee, which, with its fastenings, weighed more than two hundred and six pounds—then bursting, its splinters knocked down forty of the wooden figures, nailed around the guns to represent men. The explosion also shattered one of the beams of the deck above—started several planks, one ten and a half feet long, another five and a quarter, &c.

At another trial, the fourth shot struck three feet above the water, and, by the explosion, knocked off the butt of a plank, and made a hole nearly three feet square. Moreover, two strakes of planking below, and one above this hole, twenty-two feet long, were started more than five inches from the frame, at the place of explosion, and two inches at the scarfing. The commission of officers, appointed to conduct the experiments, reported, that a like breach at the water-line *would have sunk the ship immediately.*

A ricochet shot fired one thousand and seventy yards, lodged between two ports of the lower deck battery. Its explosion knocked out one whole plank and two-thirds of another—raised a third its entire length, and shattered a part of the frame. Another thrown twelve hundred and eighty yards, exploded in the ship's side—shattered two of the ribs—tore away two inner and outer planks of the spirketting, and made a hole more than *two* feet square.*

The experiments above quoted were made in smooth water. Had the Pacificateur been under sail in a sea-way, either shot would probably have disabled her; perhaps have caused her to founder. This being the case, a small steam-vessel presenting but little surface above the water, and armed with two or three of these guns, trained by skilful marksmen, might destroy the largest ship of the line. Hence, the importance of entrusting the duties of the Revenue service principally to small steamers, manned from the Navy and armed only with chase guns to throw 'shell-shot.' The first requisite for such vessels should be speed; so that in attacking or retreating, they should always appear *end on*, and thus present the least surface as a target to the opposing ships. And I imagine it would be no difficult matter to make their bows so sharp, or so to protect them with iron, that if a shot from the enemy should strike, it would glance, and do little or no mischief. With as many of these vessels stretched along our coast, as are required for the protection of the Revenue in peace, an admirable *guarda-costa* would be formed, which, in war, would render our ports and harbors, if not perfectly inaccessible, at least dangerously so, to any enemy, however numerous might be his first-rates and 74s. For, in all our plans of coast defence and national security, it should be borne constantly in mind, that so long as we are true to our own principles, and will heed the dictates of wisdom and of policy; so long are we defended from the maritime nations of the Old World, by a 'watery bulwark,' three thousand miles across. To reach us, this must first be passed by them; and in that passage, the winds and the waves, 'those unsubsidized and faithful allies of the Republic,' may disperse the strongest force; or leave it so shattered, that it would fall an easy prey to our steam-sentinels of war.

Therefore, considering the positions of our National Dock-Yards, not one south of the Chesapeake; that much of the timber used in them for ship-building, comes from the very banks of the Mississippi—considering too, the defenceless and exposed state of our Southern coast, every principle of the national interests concerned, demands the establishment of a Public Dock-Yard on the Mississippi. It would be bringing home to every man's door, in the West, a portion of the benefits, public and private, which flow from the Navy. By such an establishment, too, that section of the country would receive no more than its fair quota of the national bounty. It would be the opening of the door, through which that hardy race of watermen in the West, could enter the Naval service; thus, it would make available the dormant resources of that part of the country, and give new strength and greater powers to the Navy in war. It would serve as a connecting link between the Naval service and 10,000 Mississippi boatmen, who now feel that they are permitted to have no lot nor part in such service.

Our policy is not to send steamers abroad, but to keep them at home along our own coast,—therefore we want but few large ones. The size of those we most want for cruising on the coast, should range from 300 to 400 tons—and their average cost, if built of white-oak in Private, or *by the job* in the Public, Yards, would not exceed $75,000, or $100,000. Those built on the Mississippi, where timber is so cheap and abundant, would cost less. It would be desirable to establish on board of one of the vessels in that river, a school of practice, in which the Kentucky riflemen and the Tennessee marksmen could be trained to the Paixhans guns. By these means we should give those vessels an accuracy and a precision with their destructive missiles that would make them formidable indeed; by these means, vulgar prejudices against the man-of-war's-man's calling, would be gradually removed from a hardy and valiant class of yeomen; by these means, statesmen would accomplish the important end—always a national desideratum—of making resources that lie dormant in their country, available for the public safety and the public good; and by these means, too, the Navy would be strengthened in war, with that mighty host of brave and patriotic spirits who now sing the merry boatman's song to the 'father of waters,' and make glad with

* See an excellent translation by Lieutenant John A. Dahlgreen, United States Navy, of a little work by H. J. Paixhans, on experiments made with 'shell shot' in the French Navy.

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life and animation his peaceful tributaries of the West.

The importance of commanding the pass into, and out of, the Gulf of Mexico,* and of a Dock-Yard for ships at the South, has been often and ably set forth. I have not the presumption to suppose that I can add any thing to the force, or to the weight of what has been said on those subjects. I can only raise my feeble voice to implore the patriots of the North, to unite with the friends of their country in the South and the West, in promoting its safety and its interests, wherever these may lie. I entreat Southern and Western men to consider well the exposed and defenceless condition of their coasts; to reflect upon the importance of establishing there, suitable depots for the materials and implements of war—for providing safe places of rendezvous for shipping, and for affording the means of defence and offence, against danger from without. A Dock-Yard for steamers on the Mississippi would necessarily lead to the establishment of a National Foundry on the Western waters—which is also an object of great importance, that has been strongly urged, again and again, upon the consideration of the national law-givers.

Rumor has often charged certain members of the Navy-Board with an unfriendly disposition towards the Marine Corps. Those officers certainly have a right to their opinions, which, whatever they be, I doubt not, are honestly entertained. For an honest difference of opinion, how much soever it may sometimes, and on some subjects, be deplored, I arraign no man, blame no man; nor do I, in this case, ascribe any improper motives. As it regards this gallant little Corps, however, Mr. Editor, I wish to say a word. In the Official Reports that are annually made to Congress concerning the affairs of the Navy, it has been much the fashion of late years, to pass the Marine Corps by with a slur; and in calling your attention to the condition of the Navy, I had well nigh fallen into the same track.

The existence of the Marine Corps, is coeval with the Navy. Ashore and afloat, in the storm and the calm—in peace and in war, this little band of 'sea soldiers' has been true to its Country, the Navy, and itself. And no officer who has *cruised much at sea*, could ever doubt the utility of marines on board of our ships-of-war. They bore an honorable part in all our Naval victories and actions on the ocean; and whenever an opportunity presented itself, they as invariably embraced it, and distinguished themselves. Congress has voted the thanks of the country to its officers, and history has bestowed her meed of praise upon the privates, for their gallantry in many a bloody scene and hard-fought battle. In the gun-boats off Tripoli; in several actions of the late war; at Bladensburg under Barney; in the everglades of Florida: in short, wherever duty has called them, *there they are*, brave, patriotic and true. But the usefulness and necessity of a Marine Corps as a part of our Naval force, is a settled question, approved and endorsed by the practice and the experience of every maritime nation under the sun. England the greatest of them all, has, within the last quarter-century, and after an experience of near two hundred years, doubled her Marine force on board her cruising ships. Ask what is her opinion of that ancient and honorable Corps; and one bright column of bayonets, 10,000 strong, glitters back the reply. Ask France, and she will pass them in review, by whole ships' crews at a time.

And as to the usefulness of the Marine Corps to the American Navy, I give you, not my own, but the opinions of some of the oldest and best officers in the service. First, of Commodore Stewart whose practical and vigorous mind always leads him at once to the point; and whose opinion is of weight.

"'Whether marines can, or cannot, be beneficially dispensed with on board our public ships-of-war?'

"I would beg leave to remark, that the marines are the only portion of the crew of a ship-of-war that is wholly military, and the only part which could be rendered such, by the nature of the service, as well as the nature of those comprising the other classes. If, then, it is at all desirable or useful to have a portion of the force of a ship-of-war wholly and completely military, that portion must be composed of a regularly organized infantry, for this reason: that the sea officers, from their employments and occupations in ships-of-war, differ materially from military officers; because the ideas and general habits of sailors unfit them, in a great measure, for infantry soldiers; and because the limited space in a ship-of-war would not admit of their training; and their general duty and employment would be too much deranged and interfered with. In order to ascertain the necessity and utility of having a portion of the crew of a ship-of-war organized as infantry, it will be necessary to inquire into the object and duties of such a corps.

"The first object is, to instil into them these sound military principles—obedience, subordination, and respect, that they may be entitled to confidence in the discharge of their duties as sentinels to watch over your magazines, spirit-rooms, store-rooms, gangways, galleys, and look-outs; to preserve order, and prevent interruption to the cooking duties, and to guard your prisoners-of-war, who sometimes outnumber the crew. In port, they constitute the deck-guard, and at sea they are (at least, a large proportion of them,) always near their arms: thus they prevent surprise from without, and check mutiny within. In the ordinary duties at sea, the marine watch perform the same duties on deck which would be required of any other body of men, except going aloft; consequently, their usefulness and force as men are not lost; for there must be some men kept on deck, in reefing and furling, to haul the rigging, and manage the cordage for those who are aloft. In battle, when the ship is engaged on both sides, or when otherwise necessary, they can be distributed among the carriage-guns, for working the artillery. Should any operations, wholly military, be required of them on shore, they would be more efficient and competent to its performance. Should the combined efforts of seamen and marines be required for the surprise of posts, or the escalade of a fortress, the marines,

* For an important and able paper on the subject of national Defences, see Doc. H. R. 206, 1st Sess. 26th Congress—by a Board of Army-Officers.

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as a supporting column of regular infantry, would form a disciplined body whereon to rest the security of the other classes who are appointed to make the grand effort, and would yield them a steady column and military support in case of failure, when they would constitute the reserve, and cover the retreat and embarcation of the seamen. The latter are a class of men, whose onset and first efforts are tremendous and formidable; but, if resisted and discomfited, they break into a hundred groups, which cannot be rallied, and they become a mere mob, who, without a body of regulars to sustain them, must fall a sacrifice. Seamen have a particular aversion to the infantry drill, and, generally speaking, can be brought to little more in that art than to load and fire. That strict subordination and obedience to orders, and the pride of feeling, intuitive in a regular soldier, cannot be attained by a seaman: hence, the entire confidence of the officers, for the performance of the ordinary duties on posts, cannot be yielded them; frequent punishments would ensue for neglect and irregularities, and disgust to the service would follow. But, sir, there is another evil in attempting to make marines of sailors: the scarcity of seamen and ordinary seamen would embarrass more and more the manning of our ships-of-war, if those who act as marines be substituted from the other classes. To take them from landsmen, no advantage would be gained, as regards the increased nautical efficiency of our ships; but much would be lost with respect to the military portion—we should have the men without the seaman's or the soldier's profession. In the above observations, I have referred to the possibility of mutiny in our national ships-of-war. That mutiny has occurred in our Navy, there is no doubt. One instance took place on board the Constitution, in the Bay of Leghorn, in the year 1807. The mutiny broke out, I think, in July, and was near becoming serious. By the formidable appearance of a column of *marine bayonets*, supported by nearly a hundred gallant officers armed, it was not only suppressed, but twenty of the ringleaders were secured, and sent home in the ship, ironed, for punishment. If mutinies have not more frequently occurred in our ships-of-war, it has been owing to the mildness of our commanders, the good feelings of the seamen towards their officers, and the support afforded the latter by a steady column of bayonets. There are some who will say that marines are useless, except for idle parade. But even form and parade in a military system, is perhaps more essential, in aid of the preservation of discipline amongst republican citizens, than with the subjects of a King.

"The whole business of life may be considered a little more than bent, so far as the desire of distinction goes, towards appearances. Men are at best but grown up children, 'pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw.' Take from military service its distinguishing trappings, the possible 'pomp and circumstance of war,' the probable vote of thanks of the National Legislature, and what will then be left them to aid their patriotism, in calling forth the whole energies of the man, to support them in the perils of the battle and the ocean, the deprivations of their homes and its comforts?

"If we refer to the past services of the Marine Corps, they will be found to be among the most distinguished. Whether you take them at the charge of the bayonet, in unison with the seamen wielding the sabre and the pike, boarding the gun-boats off Tripoli, in their various actions on the ocean, or in their efforts with the seamen under Barney in resisting the advance of the British columns to your capital, you will find they have ever sustained a high reputation for discipline, conduct, and courage. Under these circumstances, I am decidedly of opinion that the *marines* cannot be beneficially dispensed with in our national ships-of-war."—[*Commodore Stewart to the Secretary of the Navy, 8th March*, 1830.

"To the interrogatory, 'whether it is necessary to the armed equipment of a vessel-of-war that *marines* should compose a part of its military force?' I answer, unequivocally, that, in my opinion, *it is* indispensably necessary."

[*Commodore Ap. C. Jones: Ib.*

"I conceive it of the utmost importance in the armed equipment of a vessel-of-war, that *marines* compose a part of its military force."—[*Commodore Kennedy: Ib.*

"I do conceive it necessary to the armed equipment of a vessel-of-war, that *marines* should compose a part of its military force."—[*Captain Hoffman: Ib.*

"Marines should compose a part of the force of a ship-of-war."—[*Captain J. J. Nicholson: Ib.*

"I cannot omit the opportunity afforded of expressing the high sense I entertain of the gallantry and good conduct of the marines. The peculiar position in which that part of my command, extending along the Florida shore, placed me, enabled me to entrust important, arduous and disagreeable duties, to those I have had so much pleasure in commanding; and none have performed their service more faithfully, more ably, and more cheerfully, than the marines—always and ever ready."

"I for one should be most happy to see the Corps increased."—[*Commodore Dallas, 28th March*, 1838.

"That there are military duties to be performed on board a vessel-of-war which cannot be as well performed by any one as by a regularly disciplined soldier, I presume none will deny; and it is to me equally clear, that with the guards allowed at present to the ships, some of those duties must be *neglected* or inadequately discharged."—[*Commodore W. B. Shubrick to the Secretary of the Navy, August*, 1839.

In 1839, the Commanders of all the vessels of the West-India squadron, united in a remonstrance, setting forth, that the detachments of marines on board the several ships of that squadron *were not sufficient to furnish a relief-guard for the number of sentinels posted.* And in closing that remonstrance to the Secretary of the Navy, Commodore Shubrick added, "I fully concur in opinion with the signers of the communication, that the guards at present allowed, are insufficient."

Notwithstanding all these testimonials, would it be believed that there has been a malign influence at work with the Marine Corps? Why, Sir, in 1830, the Navy-Board made an attempt to abolish it altogether. The letters, from which extracts are quoted above, saved it. After that, the slur was cast upon the marines by turning them away from the Navy-Yards as sentinels—and government was, as you have seen, put to the unnecessary and useless expense of hiring watchmen in their places. And after thousands have been paid to these, all of which might have been saved, the discovery is now being made, that watchmen wo'nt do—and marines have been taken back into all the Yards, I believe, but one.

The ratio of marines to sailors in the English Navy is about 1 : 2. The ratio now in the American Navy is about 1 : 8. By the law of January 2nd, 1813, one marine (private) was required for every seven sailors in the crew of a 74. By the Commissioners' table of January 20, 1838, the ratio of marines on board of a 'first-rate,' is one private for every twenty-two sailors! In 1825, the

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Navy Commissioners, with Commodore Bainbridge at their head, assigned a guard of, I think, ninety marines, as the complement of a 'first-rate'—the English have one hundred and forty. But, two or three years ago, when the hostility to this Corps had gained the ascendancy at the Navy-Board, the alternative was presented of recommending an increase of the Corps, or of diminishing the guards afloat. Of course the latter was adopted—and Commodore Bainbridge's guard of ninety, which had been found not a man too strong for one of our ships of the line, was reduced down to a mere handful of *four dozen* men: and a proportionate reduction was made for frigates, &c.

The law of 1834 fixed the number of privates of the Marine Corps, at 1000. But by increasing the active Naval force afloat, the ratio of the marines to the seamen employed, was altered; and of course some such reduction, or an increase of the Corps became necessary. You have seen some of the practical results of such reduction, and read the unheeded remonstrance of officers in command, against it.

On board ship, in cases of fire, disturbances among the crew, rows, mutinies, &c. the place of the marines is always along side the officers on the quarter-deck, with fixed bayonets—and there they are sure to be. And never has an instance occurred in which they have failed to support the officers, either in maintaining order, or enforcing discipline. It is seldom that sailors, though ordered by their officer, will arrest a brother-sailor in his career of mutiny. Cases of riot and outbreak, though not frequent on ship-board, do sometimes occur in boats, when absent on duty from the vessels to which they belong. Though several such cases have occurred within my own knowledge, I have seldom, or never, known the sailors to assist the officers; and I may add, that I have never known a marine, if near, to hesitate. In the case of the notorious mutineer, Fleming Livingston, who rose up against his officer in a boat, the sailors to a man, though called on to seize him, refused to do it; two marines came of *their own accord* to the rescue, and for that, they were bulletined by the Commander of the squadron, and honored with promotion. This little incident is mentioned, because it serves to give an idea of the different principles and motives of conduct, by which the two classes are actuated.

In the progress of *improvements* at one of our Navy-Yards, the Marine Barracks were torn down; and though Congress has twice made an appropriation for rebuilding them, or others, the Navy-Board has in each instance, set aside the law of Congress, by failing to apply the appropriation. Where is the responsibility in that case? Because of individual hostility to the Marine Corps—so say writers in the papers—a law of Congress is set aside; but certainly, I know of no reason why the works were not erected: that they are not, is another striking illustration that that Board is not only an irresponsible institution, but practically unaccountable in many respects.

The Army has its Topographical Bureau, its Department of Engineers, &c. In the re-organization of the Navy, which the whole country is looking for with so much confidence, it seems but fair and reasonable, that there should be also a Marine Bureau, over which the Commandant of the Corps, assisted by his staff, should preside. Though a part of the Navy, the duties proper of this Corps, are as separate, as distinct, and as well defined, from those of the Navy Officer, as are the duties of a Surgeon from those of a Post-Captain.

The present organization of the Marine Corps, appears defective in many respects, and imperfect in others. In my desire to see the Navy complete and perfect in all its parts, I cannot resist the temptation here presented, to make one or two remarks concerning this branch of it—premising, however, that they are mere suggestions of one who professes no very intimate knowledge of its details.

In the first place, the present plan of supplying it with officers, appears to be very injudicious and objectionable. When a vacancy occurs, instead of filling it with a graduate from the Military Academy at West-Point, they go out into the highways, and bring into it, noviciates who have been roaming over the political commons for years. It is true, that 'many a good tall fellow,' has been brought into this Corps—but, *per contra*—many a one gets into it, who from the day he enters, till he is dismissed, only brings it into disrepute. In any community, whether military or the reverse, the example of every member has its effect for good or for evil—and though the dissolute and unworthy are sure of final expulsion from the Corps, they leave behind them, to taint it, traces of their evil example. Besides this, the salary paid to such, is more than a public loss; because, abusing their trust, they never render a *quid pro quo*. For these and other obvious reasons, much better would it be to appoint into the Corps, from West-Point.

I have before me, letters and papers from many officers, in every way qualified to judge, in which the opinion is expressed and oft repeated, that the Corps is too small. In my humble opinion, if I may be allowed to express it, the public interests do require the enlargement of this Corps; but, to what extent, I am not prepared to say. The opinion has been expressed by the officers of the West-India Squadron and others, that a large portion of that force, known in our ships as landsmen, might, with great advantage to the public service, be classed with marines. It is always attempted to train a certain number of the sailors in every ship's company, to the use of the musket. But such is the aversion among seamen to every thing in the way of soldiers' duty, that I have never known one to become even a tolerable profi-

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cient with the musket. And, if *backed* by a line of sailor musketeers in boarding, I should be as apprehensive of a shot from behind as before; for in exercising them at repelling boarders with blank cartridges, I have seldom seen the exercise to conclude without some one being more or less injured by a blank shot, from some awkward musketeer. And if sailors will be so clumsy as to shoot each other, in the exercise, with blank cartridges, much more may be apprehended from them, in the confusion of an action, when they are loaded with ball.

Admirable then, it seems to me, is the suggestion of dividing the Marines into two classes, one of which shall compose the Marines proper, or Veterans—who shall perform on board ship, all the duties of Marines under the present arrangement; the other, the Grenadiers, Musketeers, or whatever be their title, whose duties on board ship, shall be very much what those of landsmen now are; and thus, in the same person, would be united the double qualifications of Landsman and Soldier. Who does not perceive the advantages, strength, and efficiency which men thus trained, would confer upon ships in close action, upon boat expeditions, descents, and skirmishes on shore, &c.?

These Grenadiers, when first enlisted, should be sent to the Marine Barracks to receive the rudiments of their soldier-education; when drafted on board ship, they would learn as readily as landsmen now do, to pull an oar, splice a rope, go aloft, hand a sail, reef, steer—and so on. And thus, they could be taught the duties requisite for an ordinary seaman, in which class they could be rated as occasion requires. It is well known that a soldier has no objections to learn the duties of the sailor, whereas the aversion of the latter to be even *like* a soldier, is insuperable. I leave this subject in abler hands—to the 'powers that be,' and to the Marine officers themselves, who, I hope, will receive, in a kindly spirit, the poor suggestions that have been ventured concerning their neglected little band.

A lame man on his hobby is said to ride like "a beggar on horseback." If I have rode too furiously, I hope that those of your readers who have followed thus far, will find an excuse for me in the circumstance that I am much of a cripple, and can mount but seldom. If I have rocked over the toes of any one, I can only say, *it is not my fault.* Had it not been for the question of veracity, raised between the statements of the 'Lucky-Bag' and of the Report, I should not have untied the 'Bag,' or have troubled your pages with any more 'Scraps.' However, before I tie up again, and dismount, permit me to thank you, Mr. Editor, for your kindness, and the reader for his courtesy.

HARRY BLUFF,
United States Navy.

P. S.—In the 2nd column of page 358, instead of saying that not one of the sloops-of-war cost less than '$113,000'—it should be $110,000. H. B.
May, 1841.

AFFECTION'S TEAR.

BY JUANA MATILDA KNIGHT,

A YOUNG MISS ONLY THIRTEEN YEARS OF AGE.

Thou bad'st me strike my harp again,
For thee, my father, dear;
The theme to swell my song upon,
To be "AFFECTION'S TEAR."

I saw an angel hovering nigh,
With tear-drop standing in his eye,—
That deep blue eye so soft and bright,
I knew him by its dewy light.

He hover'd there on seraph wings,
And with a voice that e'en now rings
Within my soul, he seemed to say,
(How sweetly) "Daughter, come away."

He fled away, but as he passed
A tear fell on me, 'twas the last
Sweet record of his heavenly love;
I knew he came far from above;
I knew him by that drop so dear,
It was, it was "AFFECTION'S TEAR."

Washington City, 1841.

DEATH, DOUBTS AND IMMORTALITY.

It may be doubted whether the prevailing sentiments on the subject of death, are in accordance with true philosophy or our Religion. As God is a being of pure benevolence, and as death is inevitable and universal—an infliction visiting alike the good and bad—the inference would seem to be that death is a good appointment. But very different from this seems to be the prevalent opinions on this subject. Excited and unhallowed fancy racks itself to find images of terror to represent this dispensation of our Heavenly Father. The "secrets of the last prison-house" of poor mortality are revealed for empty rhetorical parade, or to indulge the ravings of undisciplined imagination, till the despairing, shrinking spirit, exclaims, "Did our God make us in mockery?" It may be said that through fear many are induced to reformation. But a reformation which proceeds from a source so selfish and slavish, cannot be very sincere nor acceptable in the sight of Heaven. To base Religion on the fear of death, as many appear to do practically, if not theoretically, cannot be authorized by Reason or Revelation. In all our Saviour's teachings, we hear nothing of the terrors of death; and he certainly knew the human heart, and how best to incline it to right dispositions. *The duties of life*, occupied his compassionate mind; and were we to perform aright these sacred obligations, there would be less reason to fear the transit from one state of being to another. It were to be desired that men feared wickedness more, and death less. We practise sin with little remorse, if we think the great

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